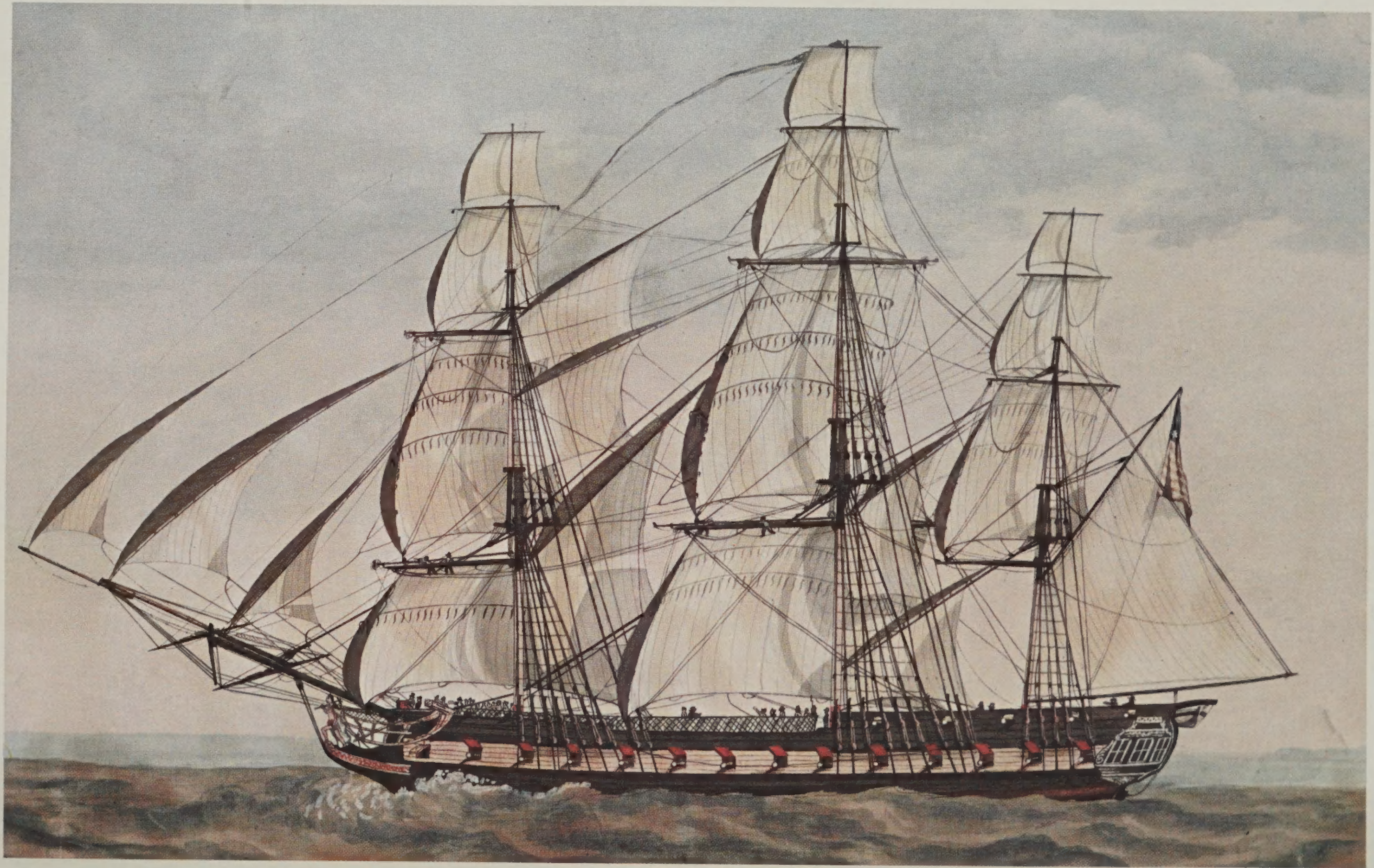
THE FRIGATE *ESSEX* PAPERS



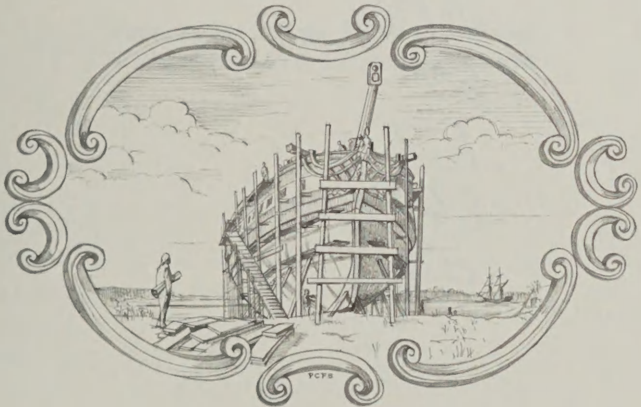
United States Frigate *Essex*, built at Salem, Massachusetts, 1799. From the only-known contemporary portrait of the *Essex*, a watercolor attributed to Joseph Howard (1780–1857), in the Peabody Museum of Salem.

THE
FRIGATE ESSEX
PAPERS:

Building the Salem Frigate 1798-1799

By *PHILIP CHADWICK FOSTER SMITH*

With Draughts By
WILLIAM AVERY BAKER



SALEM:
Peabody Museum of Salem
1974

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I Alwais thout that She [the frigate *Essex*] would be a fast Saler and think that Any town nead not be Ashamed of Such a Ship thou She Whas Built by a Set of Scoubanking Carpenters, As they had the Name of by Sume on board Your Ship, but that she would do honour to thous that Superintened her Any Whear, And that as Good a Ship Can bee Built to the North As Are Built to the Southw^{d}—thou Sume on board Your Ship was of opinon that a frigate Could not bee Built to the North^{d}

Navy Agent Joseph Waters to Purser
William Mumford, 23 December 1800

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https://archive.org/details/frigateessexpape00smit

Contents

Page

PREFACE xiii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xix

CHAPTER 1. SALEM, WORLD TRADE, AND THE NAVY 3

2. THE SALEM FRIGATE SUBSCRIPTION 19

3. THE FRIGATE COMMITTEE GOES TO WORK 37

4. PREPARATIONS FOR LAYING THE KEEL 53

5. EARLY CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS 70

6. APRIL–MAY 1799 83

7. JUNE–JULY 1799 102

8. AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1799 121

9. THE LAUNCHING 141

10. OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1799 154

11. DECEMBER 1799 173

12. EPILOGUE 188

APPENDICES 207

Abstract of Costs, 207; *Anchors*, 210; *Armorer's Forge*, 210; *Blacksmith Bills*, 211; *Block & Pumpmaker's Accounts*, 217; *Caboose (Galley Stove)*, 224; *Cannon*, 225; *Capstans*, 226; *Circular Letters to Navy Agents*, 227; *Constructor's Bills*, 233; *Cordage*, 238; *Crew's Pay Allotments*, 239; *Hull Dimensions*, 246; *Indents*, 265; *Mastmakers' Bills*, 288; *Mast & Spar Dimensions*, 290; *Miscellaneous Equipment*, 295; *Painting & Glazing*, 296; *Sails*, 297; *Shipyard Site*, 298; *Turning*, 302

GLOSSARY 305

BIBLIOGRAPHY 313

INDEX 321

Illustrations

Frontispiece: United States Frigate *Essex*

Figure *Page*

1. Map of Salem and vicinity in 1799 4
2. Salem waterfront and wharves, 1798 6
3. Salem Harbor from Stage Point in 1797 8–9
Peabody Museum of Salem
4. The ship *America*, owned by George Crowninshield and Sons 20
Peabody Museum of Salem
5. Portraits of Jacob and Benjamin Crowninshield 21
Peabody Museum of Salem
6. The ship *Belisarius*, owned by George Crowninshield and Sons 23
Peabody Museum of Salem
7. Portrait of Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert 25
Courtesy of the U. S. Department of the Navy
8. Portrait of Senator Benjamin Goodhue of Salem 28
Courtesy of the Essex Institute
9. The Salem Court House 38
Peabody Museum of Salem
10. Portrait of William Gray, Jr. 41
Peabody Museum of Salem
11. Portrait of Benjamin Pickman 42
Courtesy of the Essex Institute
12. Sloop of war *Merrimack* 43
Peabody Museum of Salem
13. Sketch of a merchant ship designed by William Hackett 45
Courtesy of the Essex Institute
14. The Salem ship *Mount Vernon* 48
Peabody Museum of Salem
15. The Continental frigate *Alliance*, designed by William Hackett 54
Courtesy of Robert G. Stone
16. Timber advertisement for The Salem Frigate 55
Peabody Museum of Salem

17. A Danvers oak tree 56
Author's photograph

18. Enos Briggs' acknowledgment to suppliers of timber for The Salem Frigate 60
Peabody Museum of Salem

19. Portraits of Thomas Croade Cushing and William Biglow 61
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

20. A twentieth-century shipyard mold loft 62
Author's photograph

21. United States frigate *Boston* 71
Courtesy of the U. S. Department of the Navy

22. Portrait of Paul Revere 74
Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

23. Portrait of Benjamin Hodges 77
Peabody Museum of Salem

24. Portrait of Ichabod Nichols 78
Peabody Museum of Salem

25. Aerial view of Winter Island 84
Courtesy of Richard Cooper Kelsey

26. Fort William (Fort Pickering), Winter Island 86
Peabody Museum of Salem

27. Model of a Brodie Stove, or ship's hearth 87
Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England

28. Sail plan of the frigate *Essex* 91
Peabody Museum of Salem

29. Portrait of John Howard 92
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

30. View of the Salem Iron Factory, Danvers 94
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

31. Seal of the Salem Iron Factory 94
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

32. Receipt for frigate *Essex* subscription payment 103
Peabody Museum of Salem

33. William Hackett's original draught of the frigate *Essex* 104–105
Courtesy of the National Archives

34. Breaming a vessel 110
Peabody Museum of Salem

35. Stowage of kentledge aboard the U. S. frigate *Chesapeake* 113
Peabody Museum of Salem

36. Sketch of unidentified vessel from The *Essex* Papers 118
Peabody Museum of Salem

37. Portrait of Samuel McIntire 126
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

38. Detail of the *Essex*'s figurehead and trailboards 127
Peabody Museum of Salem

39. Interpretation of the *Essex*'s trailboard design 128
Courtesy of Walter J. Zimmerman, Jr.

40. Detail of the *Essex*'s port quarter gallery 129
Peabody Museum of Salem

41. Stern carving design for unknown vessel by Samuel McIntire 130
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

42. Stern carving design for unknown vessel by Samuel McIntire 130
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

43. Pump-makers at work and length of match rope made for the *Essex* by Joseph Vincent 136
Peabody Museum of Salem

44. Portrait of Jonathan Haraden 138
Peabody Museum of Salem

45. Launching ways of the 74-gun ship *America* 142
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

46. Portrait of Elias Hasket Derby 143
Peabody Museum of Salem

47. Launching of a Salem schooner or brig 144
Peabody Museum of Salem

48. The Salem waterfront from Salem Neck 147
Peabody Museum of Salem

49. View of Winter Island and the fort from Salem Neck 147
Peabody Museum of Salem

50. Launching of the ship *Fame*, 1802 149
Courtesy of the Essex Institute

51. Salem fish-packing screw press 159
Peabody Museum of Salem

52. The *Essex*'s gun carriages in 1809 161
Peabody Museum of Salem

53. Portrait of Captain Edward Preble, U.S.N. 162
Courtesy of Rear Admiral Dundas Preble Tucker, U.S.N., ret.

54. The *Essex*'s capstans in 1809 176
Peabody Museum of Salem

55. The *Essex*'s capstans in 1809 177
Peabody Museum of Salem

56. A Salem schooner loading 181
Peabody Museum of Salem

57. Certificate of dimensions of the *Essex* 186
Peabody Museum of Salem

58. Portrait of Captain David Porter, U.S.N. 194
Peabody Museum of Salem

59. The *Essex* and her prizes at Nuku Hiva 196
Peabody Museum of Salem

60. Capture of the *Essex* in Valparaiso Bay, 28 March 1814 196
Peabody Museum of Salem

61. Broadside pertaining to the capture of the *Essex* 200
Peabody Museum of Salem

62. Hulks and ships in ordinary at Plymouth, England 203
Courtesy of The Parker Gallery, London

63. Map of Winter Island and the shipyard site 299

Preface

SHOULD anyone expect to find a plank-by-plank reconstruction of the United States Frigate *Essex* in this book, it might just as well be replaced on the shelf without further loss of time. The passage of many generations since she was built has extinguished any hope that this could be accomplished from existing contemporary sources. The hull disappeared in 1837. It cannot be sketched, painted, photographed, or measured; nor can the persons in any way connected with it be interviewed except through the scraps of paper they left behind them. These brittle reminders of a celebrated ship-of-war nevertheless form a distinct image of the logistics of her construction and of the people who built her. That is what this book is about.

Those of a technical turn of mind who require dimensions will not be entirely disappointed. The narrative is laced with them, and long lists of statistics drawn from contemporary documents are reproduced in full at the end. They are remarkable in their scope and have formed the framework around which the accompanying draughts have been prepared. No claim is entertained that the draughts are perfect, yet they are as much so as the available information and the accumulated wisdom of William Avery Baker, one of the few living naval architect-historians who could have undertaken such an assignment, have been able to make them.

I will be excused, I trust, if I have erred on the side of quoting very extensively from the writings of those who participated in the construction of the *Essex*. I have done so consciously in the belief that they knew better than I could what was going on at the time and are entitled to the liberty of expressing themselves without the benefit of my twentieth-century meddling.

The manuscripts upon which the narrative is based may well be unique. I am unaware of another collection of comparable age or character in the United States. Known as "The *Essex* Papers," they fill five closely packed manuscript boxes in the library of the Peabody Museum of Salem. They consist of 705 individual items from receipts to itemized bills to detailed letters, 282 subscription payment receipts, 285 chits for seamen's allotments, the Navy Agent's Day Book, his bank passbook for the frigate account, three wage and account books, and a sixty-eight-page letterbook. Their remarkable completeness may be judged from a comparison of the bills with the officers' indents of the materials, stores, provisions, and equipment on board the *Essex* just before she sailed from Salem Harbor in December 1799. Of the several thousand items enumerated in the indents, only a fraction cannot be accounted for from the original bills or receipts of the suppliers.

This remarkable collection came into the possession of the Peabody Museum in 1940. Its existence had long been suspected, but until that time it had failed to materialize. Museum Director Lawrence Waters Jenkins (1872–1961) and then-Assistant Director Walter Muir Whitehill believed that if the papers existed at all the most likely source would be Jenkins' cousin several times removed, William Crowninshield Waters, Jr. (1871–1964), whose great-grandfather, Captain Joseph Waters, had been the Navy Agent in charge of the frigate's construction.

"Uncle Billy" Waters, as he was affectionately known to many of the senior members of the Museum staff, was a frequent visitor to Jenkins' office, where both men enjoyed the indulgence of a good chat. Very often the topic of conversation centered around some object or bundle of manuscripts relating to Salem's maritime history which Uncle Billy had discovered among his family possessions and proposed to give to the Museum. The supply, at times, seemed inexhaustible, but for anyone who was familiar with his home it was not surprising. Laquered tables, trays, and knife boxes, imported from Japan in 1799 by one of his shipmaster ancestors whose vessel had been chartered by the Dutch at Batavia to perform a voyage to Deshima, furnished his sitting and dining rooms. Portraits of his ancestors and their ships hung on every wall, and stashed away in the cellar, or in cupboards, or under the eaves of the attic were boxes, and trunks, and sea chests bulging with the letters, ledgers, and journals of his Salem forebears. None of them appeared ever to have thrown anything away. Even Uncle Billy wasn't sure what he had.

During the latter part of the 1930s, Lawrence Jenkins and Walter

Whitehill both took advantage of his regular visits to their offices to inquire occasionally if he hadn't material to do with the building of the *Essex*. He would shake his head and say "no," he didn't think so, but on 3 May 1940 he appeared at the back door with twelve cartons of miscellaneous papers he had uncovered in his house, all of which he wanted to turn over to the Museum library. Three contained papers of Captain Clifford Crowninshield, six others held manuscripts pertaining to Captain James Devereux, and one box each had material kept by Captains Joseph Mosely, William Dean Waters, and Joseph Waters. The latter turned out to be "The *Essex* Papers."

These were sorted out according to categories of subject matter and were placed in the library where they have since been consulted periodically by various writers, historians, and ship-modelers, but by their nature they did not particularly lend themselves to providing ready information on any given aspect of the building process. The bits and scraps of information they contained were too widely scattered within the principal categories to form any cohesive picture; attempts to put them together invariably met with the same success as putting together a jigsaw puzzle with a high proportion of pieces mixed in from other boxes. It was for this reason that early hopes of publishing the papers in their original documentary form were never realized.

Because I knew that four of my own ancestors had been among the subscribers to the fund to build the *Essex*, I took almost immediate note of their existence when I joined the Museum staff in June 1963. In consequence, I began a typescript of the papers and continued with it for a number of years whenever time permitted. I learned what others had come to realize twenty years before. The *Essex* Papers were virtually useless, if not completely unpublishable, without total digestion and resynthesis into a more palatable formula.

One of their more serious limitations is that they are "complete" only insofar as Joseph Waters himself was concerned in the business. Although the subscription fund finally bore fruit during the autumn of 1798, Waters did not enter into the picture even unofficially until mid-February of the following year. The transactions which took place during the intervening months had been handled by members of the Salem

Frigate Committee with merchant William Gray, Jr. in the chair. A few early letters and contracts drifted into Waters' hands at a later date, but most, including minutes of the Committee meetings, must have remained in the possession of the individual members. Their surviving papers contain little or nothing about the *Essex*. It therefore must be concluded, at least until other caches from other attics come into view, that they have been lost. The majority of William Gray's personal papers burned in the great Boston Fire of 1872. William Hackett, the designer, went mad half a dozen years after the ship's completion and seems to have covered most of his tracks. Enos Briggs, the master shipwright, worked under a contract by which he was responsible for the hire of the carpenters, procurement of the timber, and all other aspects involving the fabrication of the hull itself. Almost none of his papers have been found, perhaps because the house he built for himself in South Salem was still occupied by his descendants when it was destroyed in the Salem Fire of 1914.

Another regrettable deficiency in local archives is the lack of identified portraits of the principals in the drama. That is why it has not been possible here to illustrate the faces of Waters, or Hackett, or Briggs.

With respect to the *Essex* herself we are more fortunate. One of the earliest published papers concerning her origins appeared in an 1870 issue of the Essex Institute *Historical Collections*. Its author, Captain George Henry Preble, U.S.N., nephew of Commodore Edward Preble, concluded his remarks with a lamentation that no known portrait or model of the *Essex* seemed to exist, but if any did "it ought forthwith to be deposited" at an appropriate institution, several of which he named. It is highly doubtful, but not impossible, that his words had any bearing on the presentation to the Peabody Museum twenty-one years later of a superb watercolor portrait of the *Essex*. The principal detail of it is reproduced in color as the frontispiece to this book. Since then, it has been acknowledged as the only contemporary portrait of her known to exist, saving William Hackett's draught in the National Archives.

The original watercolor measures 20¾″ by 28⅝″, unframed. Now "unsigned," the Museum's original catalogue entry asserts that it was inscribed "Frigate Essex of 32 [guns] Joseph Howard," yet a notation in the catalogue, made during a subsequent inventory, adds: "appears to have been cut off at some time in mounting and framing." Close inspection of the painting, nevertheless, still reveals in the upper right-hand corner a faint handwritten inscription: "Frigate Essex of 3[remainder illegible to the edge of the sheet]," under which is a barely perceptible "Josep[remainder illegible]". It is evident that the sheet was never substantially trimmed, but certain details, when compared to photographic negatives taken decades ago, which are particularly noticeable in the inscription and in the area of the trailboard design, have obviously suffered as a consequence of a modern "cleaning". The watermark in the paper reads "BUDGEN," for Thomas Budgen, a papermaker at Dartmouth, Kent, England, from about 1778 to at least 1802. Under his name is the date "1800," and at the right is a fleur-de-lys in a shield, surmounted by a crown. The subject itself—the *Essex* in chase of what appears to be a Tunisian corsair—suggests that the scene was not painted before 1801 or after 1805. It is a curious combination of reality and two-dimensionality, of fine detail and the lack of it, as, for instance, the omission of the starboard side headrails and the lack of gammoning on the bowsprit.

Joseph Howard, to whom the painting has been attributed, was the eldest son of John Howard, partner of Samuel Buffum in the Salem sailmaking firm of Buffum & Howard, which made the original sails for the *Essex*. He had every opportunity to be intimately familiar with the ship before she left Salem and to consult his father's dimensions or sail plan afterwards. Born in Salem on 1 July 1780, he later became a shipping and commission merchant on Water Street—now New Derby—before transferring his business in 1827 from Salem's decaying waterfront to the animation of New York City. He died at Brooklyn in 1857. He is also said to have drawn the original sketch used for the design in the certificate of membership of the Salem Charitable Mechanic Association, of which his father was a founding member and its first president.

Recent investigations have established a connection between the donor of the painting and Joseph Howard. Given to the Peabody Museum in 1891 by John P. Glover, a Salem house painter, it develops that Glover was the husband of Howard's niece, Mary Elizabeth Hay. Exactly how it descended to him has eluded me.

It is a fortunate coincidence that both The *Essex* Papers and the Howard watercolor came to be lodged under the same roof at the Peabody Museum. Between them, they serve to underscore the industry of the people who caused "The Salem Frigate" to be built. It is equally appropriate that, together, they should form the basis of a book published not only on the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the ship's launching but also during the 175th anniversary year since the establishment of the museum of the Salem East India Marine Society, now known as the Peabody Museum of Salem.

PHILIP CHADWICK FOSTER SMITH
Curator of Maritime History
Managing Editor, The American Neptune

Peabody Museum
Salem, Massachusetts

Acknowledgments

THE responsibility for awakening my interest in this subject rests with my mother, Mrs. Philip Horton Smith, who, in my childhood, first explained that the vinegary old gentleman in the portrait over the stair landing, had once "contributed" a sum of money to help build the *Essex*. My wife, since, has materially sustained that interest by her cheerful encouragement to get on with the book and its attendant trials. An apology is offered not only to her but to my two small daughters for my too many long preoccupations. As on previous occasions, my parents-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. de Ledesma, and Mrs. William Ward-Clarke have afforded me and my family the peaceful surroundings of their home in rural England, by which the writing process has been greatly accelerated.

William Avery Baker cannot be praised too highly for the meticulous care he has exercised in producing the draughts accompanying this volume, and I am also indebted to Peabody Museum Director Ernest S. Dodge; Walter Muir Whitehill, Director Emeritus of The Boston Athenæum; and John C. Bower, Jr., a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *The American Neptune*, for advice and counsel. David B. Little, Director of the Essex Institute, and Mrs. Charles Potter, Librarian, permitted me free access to their institution's bottomless pit of manuscripts pertaining to Salem and to Essex County, without which much of the background material could not have been rooted out.

Peabody Museum Staff Photographer Markham W. Sexton deserves special thanks for bearing the brunt of the photographic labors. I am also under obligation to the following for additional illustrations: The Essex Institute (Salem), Richard Cooper Kelsey, the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), the National Archives (Washington, D. C.), the National Maritime Museum (Greenwich, England), the Department of the Navy (Washington, D. C.), The Parker Gallery (London), Robert G. Stone, Rear Admiral Dundas Preble Tucker, U.S.N. (ret.) and Walter J. Zimmerman, Jr.

Others who have shared their knowledge or have assisted greatly in other ways include staff members of the Baker Library (Harvard University), the Library of Congress, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New Hampshire Historical Society, the Office of State Papers (Dublin, Ireland), the National Archives (Washington, D. C.), the Peabody Museum of Salem, the Portsmouth (N. H.) Historical Society, and the Public Record Office (London).

Also, M. V. Brewington, former Director of the Kendall Whaling Museum; Bernard T. Carter, Head of the Department of Pictures, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England, and John Munday, Deputy Keeper, at the same institution; Wroth Estes, M.D.; Marc Friedlaender, The Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Lieutenant-Commander Michael Godfrey, R.N. (ret.); Vice Admiral Edwin B. Hooper, U.S.N. (ret.), Director and Curator of Naval History, Department of the Navy; Harold Hugo and William J. Glick of the Meriden Gravure Company; Harry Milliken of The Anthoensen Press; William Quinn; and Richard J. Wolfe, Rare Books Librarian, Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine.

P.C.F.S.

THE FRIGATE *ESSEX* PAPERS

CHAPTER 1

Salem, World Trade, and the Navy

THE face and spirit of Salem have changed almost beyond recognition since the frigate *Essex* was built there in 1799. Where cool harbor waves once lapped the wooden hulls of vessels discharging their cargoes of European, East Indian, and Oriental produce, now motor cars and tractor trailers grind by, enveloped in pale blue fumes and shimmering heat. In its heyday, Salem Harbor swept up what is now New Derby Street and, punctuated by blunt little wharves, turned a corner of ninety degrees up Mill, now Margin, Street at the foot of the twentieth-century Post Office steps, then bore off past Maloon's Mills beneath Mill Hill towards Castle Hill half a mile to the south. In the winter, children still skate on the reed-choked swamp pools below the hills, yet few, if any, know their games of ice hockey are played upon the vestigial and only visible remains of a major body of water that formerly connected directly with the main harbor. The ancient South River continues to flow underground into the sea just the same, for when storms accompanied by especially prolonged or heavy rains combine in time with uncommonly high tides, its remains seep through the thick concrete walls of the Boston & Maine railroad tunnel and, in retribution for its encroachment, flood it.

Not many people pause to consider what lies beneath their feet as they pass and repass over old waterfront areas of Salem, long since filled up and built on, but during the latter part of the winter of 1971, as on other occasions from time to time, a fleeting glimpse into the past was exposed for about ten days; then vanished again without trace. Few interested people saw it before it was gone. A deep trench, extending the length of Derby and New Derby Streets and beyond, was opened for the installation of a new utility line. Out of it, at a point once occupied by a muddy beach sandwiched between wharves, came clay pipes, broken hand-blown rum bottles, glass cruet stoppers, fragments of embossed copper, the brass tip of a walking stick, several small china dolls, innumerable shards of various dates but including pieces easily identifiable as Chinese export porcelain, and an almost intact Japanese cup, blue and white inside with a chocolate-brown glaze on the exterior, its breaks so fresh as to suggest it had been whole before the

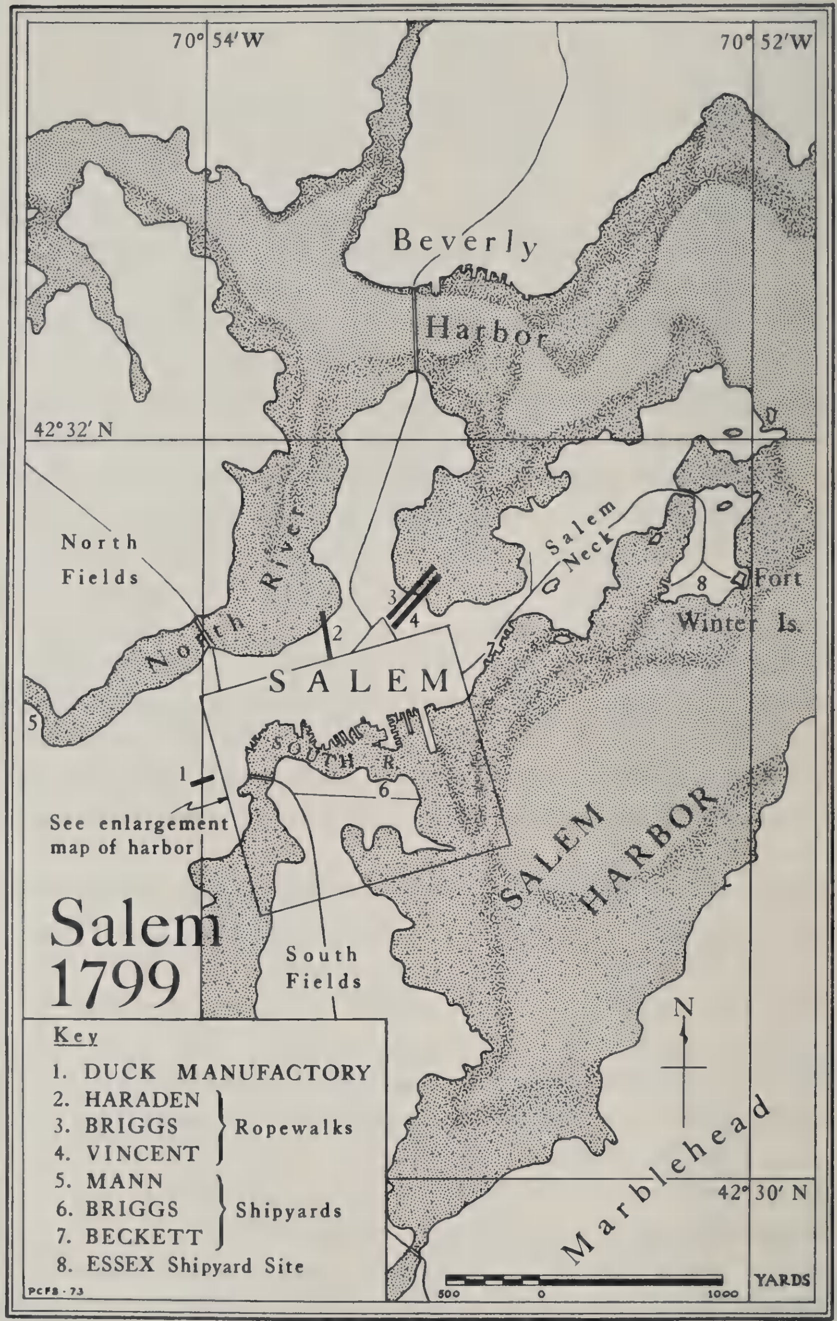


FIG. 1. A map of Salem and vicinity, circa 1799, before the massive infilling of the late nineteenth century reduced Salem Harbor to its present configuration. (*Author's map*)

earth digger had smashed it in its jaw. Not far from the spot where the trench crossed the southerly end of Liberty Street, the backhoe chanced to cut through the earth at just the right place to reveal three completely distinct street levels, the lowest of which unquestionably represented ground level of the late eighteenth century. The egg-shaped beach stone cobbles, set on end in sand like teeth in gums, lay a full twenty-four inches below the modern asphalt surface.

Whenever excavations have taken place near the foot of High and Gedney Streets to the immediate south of the Post Office, the butt ends of rotting timbers have appeared three to four feet into the ground. These either must be the remains of some of the furthest wharves built up into the South River or the structural pilings of a small bridge that spanned what once was Ruck's Creek. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, small vessels were built beside this little creek in an area then known as "Knocker's Hollow," from the never-ending hammering of ship carpenters' mauls and caulkers' mallets.

"Knocker's Hollow" has shared a common fate with the majority of Salem's shipyard and original waterfront sites. They now lie well inland and well buried. Only two or three, including that where the *Essex* was built, could still launch a ship.

When the *Essex* was built, the shipbuilding trade at Salem was already almost 170 years old. It seemed to be on the brink of an unparalleled period of prosperity and growth. No one then living would have believed that within another seventy-five years shipbuilding, together with all the attendant trades it helped to sustain—the sailmakers, anchorsmiths, ropemakers, ship chandlers, and the like—for all practical purposes would be a thing of the past.

Boatbuilding and shallop construction had begun in Salem about 1629; full-scale shipbuilding started almost as soon. Within a dozen years, the capabilities of the infant town, spurred on by the exhortations of the Reverend Hugh Peter, had developed so astonishingly that it had been able to complete a ship of 300 tons. She was tremendous by the standards of the day and place, but was nonetheless an anomaly because few other Salem-built ships approached her in size for another hundred and fifty years.

Unlike some other coastal towns of Massachusetts, such as those on the Merrimac River in northern Essex County or others along North River in Plymouth County, shipbuilding in Salem rarely, if ever, was a principal factor of the economy. It well served the mercantile activities of the port but

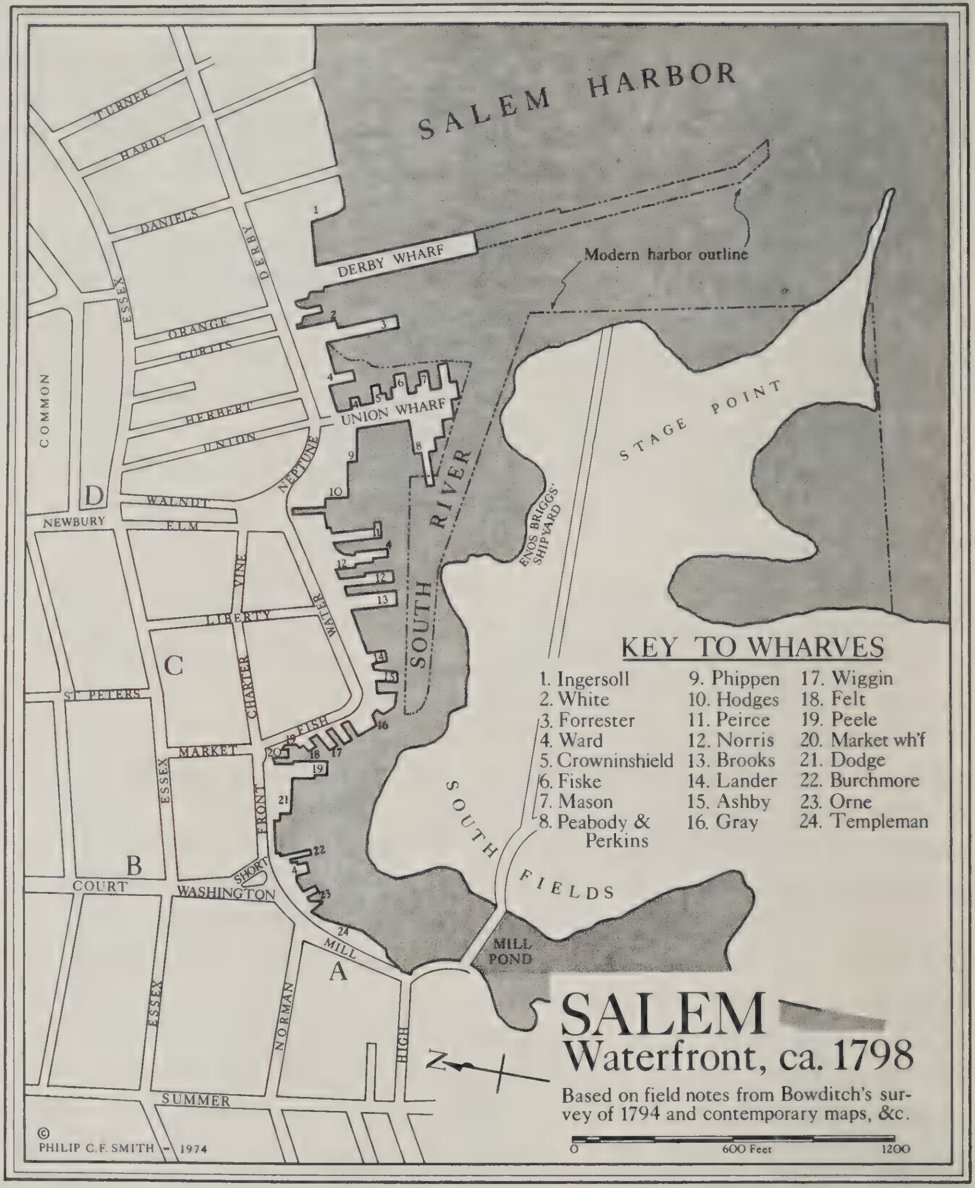


FIG. 2. The Salem waterfront, circa 1798, showing the sweep of the wharves up into the long-vanished South River. Modern landmarks by which to judge the changes in the region are (A) the Salem Post Office, (B) City Hall, (C) the Peabody Museum of Salem, and (D) the Hotel Hawthorne. (*Author's map*)

by no means became the master of them. Traditionally, most Salem-owned vessels were not the products of Salem builders; of those registered in the Beverly-Salem-Marblehead Custom district between 1752 and 1768, for example, only sixteen percent had been built in Salem. Forty-eight percent had come from Merrimac River yards, principally Newburyport; the remainder from other towns bordering Massachusetts Bay and far beyond.

From the conclusion of the Revolutionary War to the launching of the *Essex* sixteen years later, Salem yards added approximately seventy vessels to its fleet engaged in foreign trade. At the beginning of the 1790's, the Salem merchant fleet consisted of five ships, forty-one brigs or brigantines, seventy-six schooners, and two sloops. Its composition still reflected the less imaginative merchants' continuing preoccupations with the comfortable, time-tested trade routes to the West Indies and Southern Europe, established during colonial times. So, too, did the contracts for new vessels made with local builders. Schooners and brigs predominated.

In 1790, Salem was the sixth most populous community in the United States, ranking only behind Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston. Duties paid at its Custom House accounted for five percent of the country's entire revenue, yet its trade was still on the threshold of an explosive awakening to the world's market places. Salem's most active and innovative postwar merchant, Elias Hasket Derby, had nevertheless already sent ships into the Baltic for iron, flax, hemp, sailcloth, tar, and pitch. His bark *Light Horse* in 1784 had been the first American vessel to make the direct voyage to Russia. His ship *Grand Turk*, the first of the name, that same year had been sent out to the Cape of Good Hope. There, quite accidentally, her captain derived commercial information from the officers of the New York ship *Empress of China* which prompted Derby to send the *Grand Turk* the following year on a voyage that resulted in her becoming the first Salem vessel and the third American one to initiate trade with the Chinese at Canton. Other Derby ships, some commanded by younger generation Crowninshields, who before long would blossom forth in partnership with their father, began trading with the Isle of France (Mauritius), Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. Trade was rife with much of Europe and the French, Dutch, and Danish West Indies.

One man's initiative could not remain exclusive for long. Baltic voyages continued to rise in numbers. By 1788 both William Gray, Jr. and William Orne had broken into the China Trade; that year nine Salem ships cleared

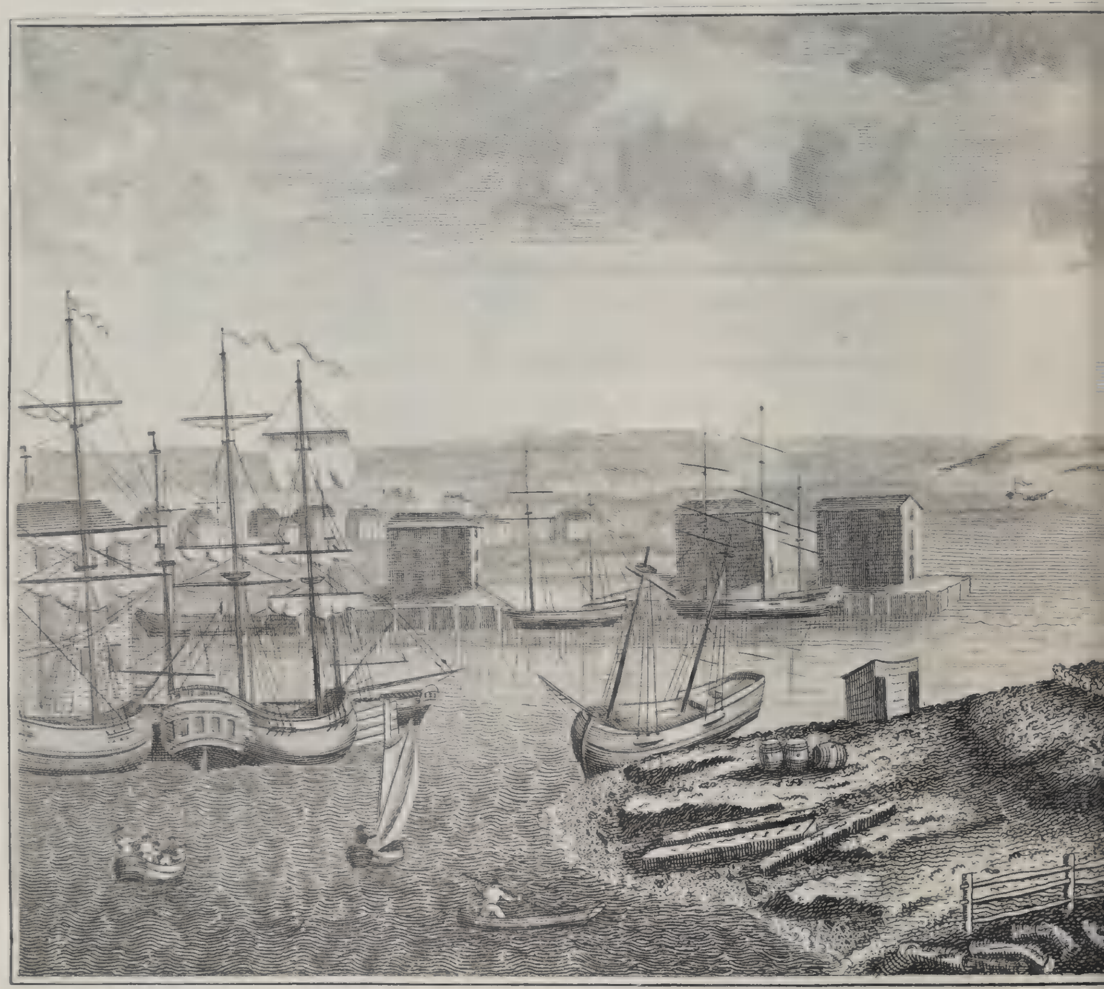


FIG. 3. Salem Harbor from Stage Point in 1797. At the far left is the end of Union (Long) Wharf, the South River, and Derby Wharf. In the distance, a flag flies from Fort William on Winter Island;

in the foreground, launching ways and timber identify Enos Briggs' Stage Point shipyard. From the membership certificate of the Salem Marine Society, founded in 1766.

for the Cape of Good Hope or beyond, and from 1794 until the end of the century entrances at the Custom House from the Cape or points east averaged fifteen a year. Experimental ventures were tested at Mocha, Muscat, and Manila; while in 1795 Captain Jonathan Carnes, in command of the schooner *Rajah*, slipped away with an official clearance for India to cloud his true destination, but then returned eighteen months later with a cargo of wild Sumatra pepper that yielded a profit of 700 percent to the owners. Despite the carefully guarded secret of its source, it was not many years before other ship owners, like George Crowninshield and Stephen Phillips, were in on the pepper trade too.

By 1800, at least ninety Salem captains had rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Their names are synonymous with the enterprise for which Salem was so justly famed throughout this formative era—Lambert, Nichols, Carpenter, Hodges, Osgood, Mason, Crowninshield, Ropes, Silsbee, Wheatland, Orne, West, Carnes, Williams, Derby, and many others. They were a spirited, youthful fraternity, out for personal profit and for the enrichment of their employers, but also for the advancement of commercial and navigational knowledge. It was thirty of these young men who, in October 1799, less than a month after the *Essex* had slipped down the ways, came together as the East India Marine Society—the parent of the modern Peabody Museum of Salem—an organization originally composed exclusively of Salem shipmasters or supercargoes who had navigated the waters near or around the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. It was they who began the cabinet of "natural and artificial curiosities," the society's museum, the first accessions for which were an elephant's tooth and a singular double-stemmed smoking pipe described in the first catalogue as "a very sociable pipe with two mouthpieces." Both had been collected by Captain Carnes on one of his pepper voyages.

The composition of the merchant fleet altered significantly during the last decade of the eighteenth century as a result of broadening commercial horizons. Salem's three principal shipyards were building more and larger ship-rigged vessels and proportionately fewer schooners and brigs than before. Thus, by 1800, the fleet consisted of twenty-nine more ship-rigged vessels than it had ten years previously, only five additional brigs and brigantines, seventeen fewer schooners, and no sloops worth mentioning.

In a modern age of huge steel freighters and supertankers of a quarter million tons or more, it is very nearly impossible nowadays to visualize the actual size of a typical late eighteenth-century Salem merchantman, for a ship of 500 tons was then considered uncommonly large. Perhaps it may astonish, or possibly awe, modern readers to reflect upon the fact that the average dimensions of all known vessels constructed in Salem for foreign trade between 1783 and 1798 measured in length only seventy-three feet and in extreme breadth twenty-one feet. The depth factor aside, the average vessel therefore would have fitted with ease into any yacht club, country club, or Y.M.C.A. swimming pool of regulation size. In fragile creations such as these did Salem shipmasters trade around the world on voyages that might last as long as two years. That they did so, and wanted to continue to do so, was a major factor in the long-overdue establishment of a United States Navy.

At the conclusion of the American Revolution, most of the ships built or acquired for use in the Continental Navy had been captured, burned, scuttled, wrecked, or were otherwise disposed of. When the last veteran of the service, the frigate *Alliance*, was sold for a merchantman to parties at Philadelphia in 1785, a United States naval force ceased to exist. The Congress had no intention of continuing to maintain one. In fact, it could not, for the Congress had no authority to raise the requisite funds, while the confederation of states as yet had no national government to administer a navy.

When Independence had cast aside the great shield of the Royal Navy and war's end had done away with the remnants of the Continental Navy, Americans literally found themselves at sea, doing the best they could on their own. It was incumbent upon both the ship owner in planning a voyage and the shipmaster in prosecuting it to maintain a sensitive flexibility; to weave a successful course through the constantly shifting labyrinth of foreign blockades, decrees, and sanctions; to outwit piratical cruisers wherever found, whether in the East and West Indies or in the Mediterranean; and to walk a thin neutral line between the ancient animosities of Britain and France, remembering all the while the vital importance of both to the commerce of the United States.

Two areas of especial diplomatic delicacy became manifest during the first half of the 1790's, culminating during the years 1793 and 1794. Together, they served to underscore the vulnerability of an unprotected merchant marine and impelled Congress to authorize the establishment of a naval force.

The first derived from the far-reaching effects of the French Revolution as they touched French colonies overseas, particularly those in the West Indies, and the counter-pressures exerted by Great Britain to offset them. From 1793, when war inevitably materialized, American ships were caught squarely in the middle, risking detention or seizure on trumped-up charges by both sides, their allies, and by those colonial governments without respect for neutral flags. In this round of strained international relations, the British actions proved to be the most unpleasant for the United States but were hardly exclusive. The privateers unleashed by the belligerents in the Caribbean, by one reckoning, accounted for the seizure of forty-five American vessels at Montserrat, sixty-three at Dominica, seventy-two at Martinique, fifty at Antigua, thirty-eight at St. Kitts, and eighteen at St. Vincent, a listing which, in fact, only hints at the reality of spoliations and financial loss. Other American ships suffered at the hands of the British and French wherever they met, from the Baltic to the Indian Ocean. Only assiduous diplomacy, a gradual lessening of restrictions, and the passage of time effected a temporary cooling of passions.

The second major concern to the ship owners and government of the United States was the continuing tension created by piracies committed on peaceful shipping by the Barbary Powers—Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis, and Morocco—and the corrupted state of trade in the Mediterranean they had brought about. Barbary corsairs had long made a business of preying on ships of nations with which some form of treaty had not been concluded and tribute accordingly paid. Crews were carried off into slavery; ransoms were demanded for their release.

Since 1784, the United States had pursued a policy of appeasement toward the Barbary rulers while attempting to conclude treaties, particularly with the Dey of Algiers. A treaty already had been concluded with Morocco as that Power which, by reason of its geographical position, flexed the most muscle over uninterrupted trade with the Atlantic ports of southern Spain and Portugal. The Dey of Algiers, however, had refused to consider peace with the United States on any terms and had made such exorbitant ransom demands for the few American captives at Algiers that the various diplomatic missions sent to deal with the problem had been unable to accomplish much. Tunisian and Tripolitanian conditions for peace were so unreasonable that while Algiers remained unapproachable there was little to be gained by attempting rapport with the others. At the end of 1790, Algiers was nominally considered at peace with France, Spain, England, Venice, the United Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark, at great cost to each in tribute. At the same time, the Dey was at war with Russia, Austria, Portugal, Naples, Sardinia, Genoa, and Malta.

For the United States, Portugal became the catalyst between continuing appeasement and possible war. So long as Portugal and Algiers remained hostile to each other, patrolling Portuguese frigates kept the majority of Algerian cruisers contained within the Mediterranean. American ships, therefore, had little to fear from them west of the Strait of Gibraltar, unless, of course, the two powers reached an accord.

What had been feared most, finally happened; on 12 September 1793, a fragile truce was effected. Three weeks later, the Algerine fleet slipped into the Atlantic. Before winter gales ended the corsairs' sorties for the season, a number of American vessels and well over 100 American seamen had been caught napping and were captured.

The horrifying prospect of Algerines gaining the open Atlantic at will finally caused Congress to take action. On 20 January 1794, a Congressional committee, charged with making recommendations about a naval force necessary to protect American commerce from them, brought in its report. It proposed a fleet of four ships of forty-four guns each and two others of twenty-four guns. Revised tariffs, including a further duty of one percent added to the existing seven and a half percent then paid on imported goods, wares, and merchandise, were considered sufficient to raise the extra revenue.

Congress responded on 27 March 1794 by the passage of an act authorizing President Washington to provide "by purchase or otherwise, equip and employ" four frigates of forty-four guns and two of thirty-six, rather than twenty-four, providing always "That if a peace shall take place between the United States and the Regency of Algiers, that no farther proceeding be had under this act."

The ships laid down as a result would eventually become the forty-fours *United States*, *Constitution*, *President*, and *Chesapeake*, and the thirty-sixes *Constellation* and *Congress*. These had progressed slowly to various stages of completion when a Treaty of Peace and Amity with Algiers, finally signed in September 1795, was ratified on the seventh of March 1796. Almost immediately, Congress exercised the escape clause in the act of 1794 to end work on the frigates, but in April authorized construction to proceed on the *United States* at Philadelphia, the *Constitution* at Boston, and the *Constellation* at Baltimore. Work ceased on the other three until renewed hostilities with France a few years later caused the navy to expand dramatically and led to the building, among others, of the *Essex*, "The Salem Frigate." At Portsmouth, New Hampshire, meanwhile, where the *Congress* lay in a state of suspended animation on the stocks, attention began to shift to the construction of a frigate to be known as the *Crescent*, one of the armed ships of war to be built for and presented to the Dey as part of America's tribute due him under the treaty.

In the meantime, relations between the United States and France had continued to deteriorate as a result of the American position of neutrality. This the French viewed as incompatible with the 1778 Treaty of Alliance, under the terms of which they considered the United States technically liable to assist in the defense of the French West Indies, if called upon to do so, but certainly bound to open its own ports for the use of French privateers. To the French, the conclusion of Jay's Treaty with Great Britain in 1794 smacked of betrayal and hardly served to cast oil upon the troubled waters.

On 2 July 1796, the French Government issued the first of several repressive decrees aimed at American shipping. It warned that "the flag of the French Republic will treat neutral vessels, as to confiscation, search, or detention, in the same manner as they shall suffer the English to treat them." Under this cover, French privateers again went into action, with a ferocity that made the earlier English spoliations pale by comparison. Another decree, dated 2 March 1797, tightened the noose further still; any United States citizens found aboard captured ships of the enemy, regardless of extenuating circumstances such as involuntary impressment, would be looked upon as pirates and dealt with accordingly. All vessels, furthermore, would be legal prizes if the crew list (*rôle d'équipage*) had not been completed in a manner claimed to have been specified in the Treaty of 1778. Shipmasters hadn't the faintest idea what the prescribed form was because they had never heard of it. Many fell blindly into the trap. By midsummer of 1797, Secretary of State Timothy Pickering had compiled a list of more than 316 American vessels upon which the French had committed spoliations during the past year.

The entire question sparked off a raging controversy at home between the pro-French Republicans and the pro-British Federalists. It was soon learned that Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, who had been sent to Paris to attempt an amicable settlement of differences between the two governments, had not been received by the Directory and had been treated in a fashion insulting to his rank as an official envoy. Newly inaugurated President John Adams convened a special session of Congress to offer assurances that, although he intended to pursue a policy of peaceful settlement as long as possible, the state of affairs in Europe as well as the continuing affronts to American persons and property at sea should prompt the Congress to allow the merchant marine to arm itself for defensive purposes and to pass legislation for the completion of the frigates laid down under the Navy Act of 1794.

On 1 July 1797, Congress granted him authority to cause the frigates *United States*, *Constitution*, and *Constellation* to be "manned and employed," but ignored the other three upon which work had been stopped and, for the moment, did nothing about arming the merchantmen. Until now, however, only the *United States* had been launched. The *Constellation* would be launched on the seventh of September following and the *Constitution* on the twenty-first of October. None would be ready for sea before late June 1798.

Within months after Adams had decided to supplement the mission to Paris by the addition of Federalist John Marshall and Republican Elbridge Gerry, the French Directory handed down still another decree in an attempt to stifle American commerce. "The character of vessels in what concerns their quality as neutral or enemy shall be decided by their cargo; in consequence every vessel found at sea, laden in whole or in part with merchandise coming from England or her possessions, shall be declared prize goods, whoever may be the proprietor of these productions or merchandise." This caused great consternation, prompting some scrupulous shipmasters to file the engraved names of English manufacturers off their navigating instruments.

In March 1798, the first dispatches from Pinckney, Marshall, and Gerry reached Adams. They revealed that three alleged representatives of Foreign Affairs Minister Talleyrand, identified only as Messrs. X, Y, and Z, were demanding a public apology from Adams for presumed inflammatory remarks against the French Republic, and that "a sum of money was required for the pocket of the Directory and ministers, which would be at the disposal of M. Talleyrand: and that a loan would also be insisted on," as conditions for the commencement of formal negotiations. It sounded too much like the Dey of Algiers all over again; Adams could perceive no further hope of negotiation and said so.

Congress demanded copies of the dispatches from the President, digested their content with mounting astonishment and indignation, and then caused them to be published. The Federalists were jubilant; the Republicans severely stung. Not until that moment was the stage truly set for the tremendous expansion of the United States Navy that took place and the beginning of a three-year undeclared war at sea, now known as the "Quasi-War with France."

The ship owners of Salem were no strangers to hardships or to heavy financial losses occasioned by the spoliations of the past years. Many familiar merchants had been affected—Joseph Waters, Hardy Ropes, Joseph Peabody, Ichabod Nichols, Benjamin Hodges, Nathaniel and Benjamin West, Timothy Wellman, Simon Forrester, and others—but the hardest hit were William Orne with the loss of two vessels, John Norris with three, and William Gray, Jr., with six. Few had escaped untouched or would remain so during the next few years. "The loss of several Vessels belonging to this Town, captured by the French under circumstances of which we have no suspicions & in Spanish ports," a Salem clergyman noted in June 1797, "has given a serious alarm to our Merchants."

Until late summer of that year, when hopes were raised briefly by false rumors that Pinckney was about to be received by the Directory at last, and then again when they were dashed, the seafaring community in Salem was riddled by indecision and mounting apprehension. "The depredation on our Commerce has been so great that we seriously feel the merchantile interest impoverished."

One by one, stories of harassment and seizure of local ships were filtering back to Salem. The brig *Lavinia* had been sent into Cuba. Joseph Waters' sloop *Amelia* had been condemned in the West Indies. A Salem ship had been taken near Turk's Island Passage but had been abandoned by her captors when a British sloop of war unexpectedly hove into view. They had rounded under her stern and raked their prize with several broadsides before taking leave of the warship in chase. The brig *George*, bound home from Bordeaux with wine, had been overhauled by a French cruiser and carried into Cadiz on the assumption she had been making for Gibraltar, yet afterwards was released. John Norris' ship *Polly*, which had sailed for Vigo in Spain with flour and provisions, had found the markets dull there and had gone on to Lisbon and then Cadiz. Off Cadiz, she had been turned away by Admiral Jervis' blockading fleet. She had set a course for Málaga, only to be stopped by a Spanish privateer, detained ten days at Ceuta, and finally released. Continuing to Málaga, she had fallen in with two Frenchmen within sight of the city, where, on the grounds that she did not have a proper *rôle d'équipage*, she was condemned at an estimated loss to Norris of $27,000.

The brigantine *Six Brothers*, owned by Isaac and John Needham, while bound to Salem from Martinique in ballast, had been captured by the privateer *Leoradie* and condemned at Guadaloupe. William Gray, Jr.'s brigantine *Eliza*, Captain William Mugford, had been boarded within range of the guns in the castle at Alicante by two launches flying Spanish colors, although, in fact, belonging to two French cruisers. She was condemned at Cartagena "under the usual pretext of a defect in the Ship's roll." The schooner *Sally*, chartered by Gray to take a cargo of fish to Bilbao, had been captured on the high seas by the privateer *Intrépide* and condemned at Nantes. Her crew list had not been found to be in order. The brigantine *Friendship*, owned by Ichabod Nichols and Benjamin Hodges, on her passage to Salem from Calcutta, had been waylaid, taken to Cap François on the excuse that she had been coming from an English port and had on board "no certificate respecting her cargo." So the news continued, week by week.

Despite the partisan squabbles and the we-told-you-so arrogance of the Federalists which followed disclosure of the "XYZ Affair," the buildup of the Navy and the legalization of privateering activities was received by the seafaring population of Salem with a sense of genuine relief. At least matters had come to a head. Certainly, the rising tide of optimism was having a salutary effect on the shipyards. The uncertainties of 1796 and 1797 had resulted in the lowest ebb of shipbuilding since the beginning of the decade, but renewed confidence was producing a boom in 1798. One schooner, five brigs, and three ships would be launched before the end of the year.

The launching of a ship, once eulogized Salem's Reverend William Bentley, himself an avid follower of such events, was "the noblest sight man can exhibit." When the time came for a launching in his day, schools closed and workmen put aside their tools. Great crowds flocked to the waterfront to witness an emotional event which once seen is never forgotten. Yet the people whose souls were stirred by the elemental drama of a well-executed launch were the same who paid scant attention to the hull as it lay upon the stocks under construction.

The frigate *Essex* was an exception to this general rule. Not since Elias Hasket Derby's "Great Ship," his second *Grand Turk*, had stabbed her bowsprit across the sky over Derby Street in 1791 had another vessel built in

Salem generated such acute interest throughout the entire building process. The *Essex* was not unlike a royal pregnancy—followed with rapt attention by nearly everyone from commoner to king.

The merchants of five seaports—Boston, Charleston, New York, Philadelphia, and Salem—would build large "subscription" frigates for the Navy. Others, such as Baltimore and Newburyport, would provide ships of lesser rate during the same period. Salem was the last to make the commitment, but once the decision had been made would pursue the endeavor with uncommon zeal; what is especially remarkable is that a town of less than 9,500 men, women, and children could or would undertake to produce a frigate of greater dimensions and superior firepower than any other subscription ship save those built at New York and Philadelphia.

NOTES

James Duncan Phillips, *Salem and the Indies* (Boston, 1947) is a source of much valuable information about Salem from the end of the Revolution to the end of the War of 1812, including spoliations involving local vessels. *Opinions of the Court of Claims in French Spoliation Cases, 1886 to 1911* (Washington, D. C., 1912), a collection of rather ponderous legal opinions nevertheless contains some insights into case histories of captured American vessels.

The analysis of Merrimac River shipbuilding is derived from the Naval Office records of the Salem Custom House from 1752 to 1765, copies of which are in the Peabody Museum of Salem from the originals at the Public Record Office, London. The author has also compiled year by year lists of merchant vessels built at Salem between 1783 and 1820. Sources included *Ship Registers of the District of Salem and Beverly, Massachusetts, 1789–1900* (Salem, 1906) and William Leavitt's "Materials for the History of Ship Building in Salem," published in volume VI (1864) of the Essex Institute *Historical Collections*. The lists demonstrate, by date and by builder, the trends in vessel-types constructed locally.

Material on the Barbary Wars and the opening phases of the Quasi-War with France is drawn primarily from the Navy Department's multivolume publications, *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers* (Washington, D. C., 1939–1945) and *Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War Between the United States and France* (Washington, D. C., 1935–1938). The effects of these conflicts on Salem are suggested throughout the first two volumes of *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D.* (Salem, 1905 and 1907).

CHAPTER 2

The Salem Frigate Subscription

WELL over a month before any of the other Salem merchants got around to thinking about doing anything on their own, George Crowninshield & Sons threw themselves into the breach by offering to the government their ship *America*, recently returned to the United States from an India voyage. "There is an order for equiping the Frigates & for purchasing 12 others of 20 & 30 guns each," Jacob Crowninshield advised his brother Richard, then in command of their ship *Brutus* on the Coromandel Coast, in a letter written on the twenty-second of April 1798, "so there is no doubt our *America* will go off among the number."

"We are informed," repeated the *New Hampshire Gazette* in an item datelined at Salem on 29 May, "that Captain George Crowninshield & Sons, of this town, have offered to Government, the loan of the Ship *America*, of 700 tons, at a valuation made by appraisers appointed by Government. The ship is now at New York, is a very fast sailer, well calculated for force, and will carry 28 guns. This is efficient patriotism, and may it find many imitators."

The Crowninshields obviously maintained an extensive and lightning-quick, if not altogether reliable, network of commercial contacts both within and without the government, for Jacob's letter was dated less than a fortnight after Secretary of War James McHenry had first put forward his naval recommendations to Samuel Sewall, Congressional Chairman of the Committee for the Protection of Commerce and the Defense of the Country. McHenry had proposed that Congress should provide for the building or purchase, and equipping, of two vessels of twenty-two guns, eight of twenty, and ten of sixteen guns in addition to the country's three existing frigates, *United States*, *Constitution*, and *Constellation*. The President, furthermore, should be vested with the authority, in case of open rupture with France, to provide and equip a number of ships of the line, not to exceed six, or an equivalent force in frigates. "The first," he supposed, could "be either built or purchased in the United States. The latter may, perhaps, be obtained in Europe; for which purpose the law should use general expressions, admitting this mode of procuring them."

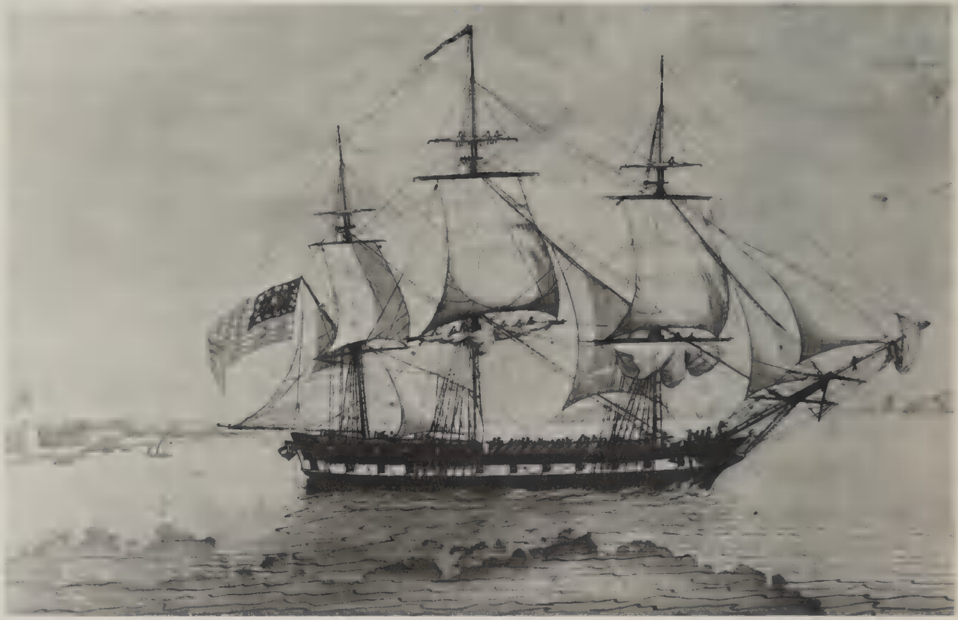


Fig. 4. The ship *America*, third of the name owned by George Crowninshield and Sons. Offered to the United States Government in 1798 for a ship of war, the terms proved to be unacceptable. From a watercolor by Michele Felice Cornè, circa 1800.

On the twenty-seventh of April, a whole five days after Jacob Crowninshield's confident predictions of the *America*'s ultimate disposition, Congress authorized President Adams "to cause to be built, purchased or hired, a number of vessels, not exceeding twelve, nor carrying more than twenty-two guns each, to be armed, fitted out and manned under his direction." Three days later Congress created the Department of the Navy to carry its votes into effect.

Certainly by late May the Crowninshields must have had every reason to believe that, under these new provisions, their offer would be snatched up eagerly by a grateful government. With some reason, they believed the *America* to be ideal for the purpose. The third of the name to have been owned by the firm, she had been purchased at the Isle of France (Mauritius) by Captain Benjamin Crowninshield in January 1797 from a Mr. C. Boudret. The price for her had been the second *America*, which Captain Ben had deemed too small for the venture in which he was then engaged, a quantity of cotton and coffee, and 28,000 Spanish milled dollars. Boudret had called his ship *Princess*; prior to that she had been the *Blonde*, a 28-gun prize corvette taken by two British warships off Ushant in November 1793.

Reputed to have had the distinction of becoming the largest vessel in the United States merchant marine at that time, she nonetheless appears rapidly to have assumed the proportions of a white elephant for George Crowninshield & Sons. Their own, walloping great wharf close to the mouth of Salem Harbor, well-remembered thanks to George Ropes' splendid panoramic painting of 1806, was then still several years into the future; in 1798, the family's shipping facilities were crammed into a crowded section of Union Wharf in the South River, which admitted insufficient room or depth of water for any such behemoth as the *America*. In short, she was too big for Salem or for any terminal facility yet built there, and the family was casting about for ways and means of turning a liability into a profit. Conditions with France were deteriorating rapidly as almost daily reports of new seizures or detentions of American vessels and cargoes became known; so much so that the Crowninshields, obsessed with an uncharacteristic gloom, were moved to confide amongst themselves: "We are determined to send no more property to sea even if we get John [Crowninshield] home safe." Their fervor to rid themselves of the real or imagined unprofitability of the *America*, if not of actual ownership of her, crested when they thought the government would be willing to take her off their hands. What better light at the end of the tunnel than one conveniently tinged with a glimmer of patriotism?

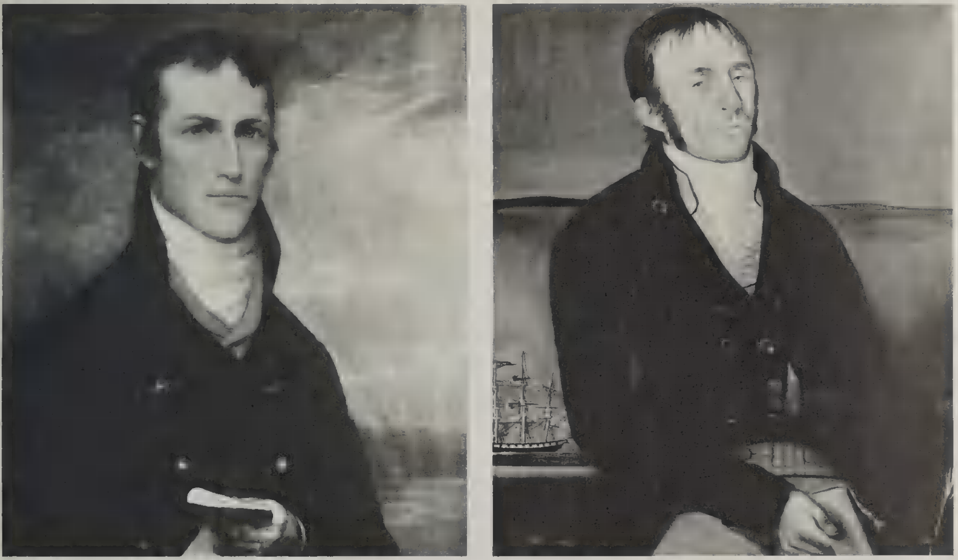


FIG. 5. (*Left*) Jacob Crowninshield (1770–1806) from an oil painting attributed to Robert Hinkley, and (*right*) Benjamin Crowninshield (1785–1836).

As months passed without the least response to what they considered an extremely valuable and timely offer, their irritation began to mount and was compounded further by the knowledge that the naval force of the country already had been augmented by several ships purchased from private owners. At last, it must have given way to acute frustration together with the feeling that obviously they somehow had failed to make their intentions sufficiently clear.

In the meantime, Congress continued to debate the naval question and passed an additional act authorizing the President to receive as loans from the merchants of the more affluent seaports six frigates of thirty-two guns or more, as well as a number of smaller vessels. "The law authorizing the President to accept the loan of ships of war," the *Salem Gazette* editorialized, "is an invitation to the wealthy to offer them; and those rich merchants who have, by address, tendered their support to the measures of government, have hereby pledged themselves to make such offers. We may expect soon to see a ship added to the American Navy by the merchants of Salem."

It is evident from this, as well as from the continuing efforts of the Crowninshields, that for some while confusion must have existed in Salem as to the precise intent of the new bills. What, exactly, constituted a "loan"? Could an individual or single mercantile house offer to lend an existing ship, or by "loan" did the government mean an investment of cash by a body of merchants, then to be translated into the construction of an entirely new vessel? Although the Crowninshields continued to stick by their guns, other local merchants quickly understood it to be the latter, for about the fifth of July thirty-three Boston merchants had met to subscribe funds for a Boston frigate and within half an hour had pledged $72,000, with more to come. Each subscriber could expect a return on investment in six percent government stock; he neither was nor was expected to be philanthropic.

A Salem subscription began on 16 July 1798. The *Salem Gazette* announced it promptly the next day.

> PATRIOTIC SUBSCRIPTION. Last evening a subscription was begun in this town, for raising money for the use of government, to be applied to the building of vessels, or such other purposes as government may choose. We have no doubt of being able in our next to announce a very generous amount subscribed, as neither ability or patriotism is wanting.
>
> ☞ *Those who are disposed to aid the subscription, are informed that the paper is left at the Insurance Office for signatures.*

In a roundabout way, the *Gazette* was alluding to what the merchants of Newburyport had recently done; they had raised their full amount within a matter of days. The proponents of the Salem subscription, however, had been overly optimistic of success. A week later the *Gazette* had little to say on the subject more than it was "expected that the subscription in this town will also [like that in Philadelphia] be applied to the building of a stout frigate." In his personal observations, the Reverend William Bentley of the East Church was more candid. "The *Subscriptions* of Salem *for Ships* of the Government, does not proceed with that energy discovered in many towns." It had, in fact, failed miserably. The reasons why were to become apparent later on.

While the subscription paper gathered dust in the Insurance Office, the Crowninshields set about to clarify the particulars of their offer. This time, however, they also threw in their ship *Belisarius*, four years old, Salem-built, and a notoriously fast sailer. She had returned to Salem on the twenty-sixth of July from a voyage to the East Indies, bringing "John home safe."

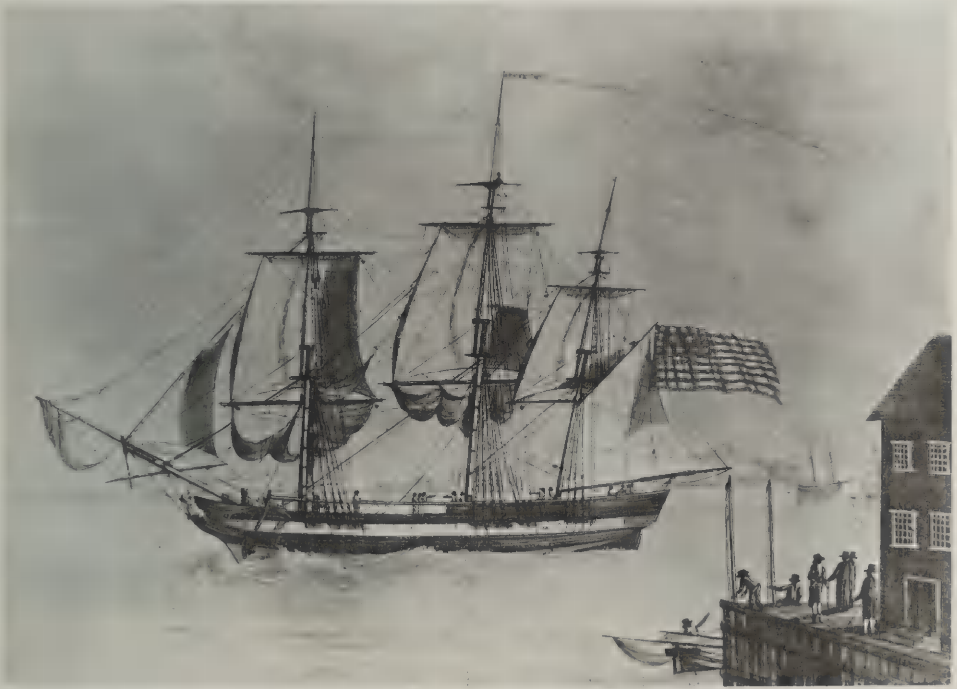


FIG. 6. The Salem ship *Belisarius*, offered to the United States Government in 1798 by her owners, George Crowninshield and Sons. One of the fastest vessels in the Salem merchant fleet, she was built at Salem in 1794 by Enos Briggs. From a watercolor attributed to Michele Felice Cornè, circa 1800.

On 16 August they wrote to Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert, evincing their "attachment to our Gov^{t} & Country at this serious crisis in our public affairs, by something more than mere professions" and asking the Secretary "to tender thro you, to the supreme Executive of the Union, an offer of two valuable fast sailing Ships, extremely well calculated for War, viz the *America* & *Belisarius*, both of which we wish may be received as a Loan of money to Government at a value only equal to what they cost, with the charges or what they are now really worth. . . ." After describing each in detail as to costs and the condition of their hulls, spars, rigging, and sails, they continued by soliciting the care of fitting them out for naval service, to "be indulged with naming a Commander & Off^{s} from this Town," and then requested that "at any future day when these vessels may not be wanted for the Service of our Gov^{t} we may be favored with the preference in the purchase.

"We make an offer of these two vessels upon loan with the greater pleasure at this time," their four-page letter concluded, "as we expect the Gov^{t} may have occasion for considerable advances to carry on the contemplated addition to our maritime force & which we most heartily wish to see successfully employed against the present pirates of the sea, who have been too long suffered to commit depredations the most unheard of on our defenceless Commerce, and we are very much pleased to find Gov^{t} so much in earnest in affording it the complete protection which its great importance so justly merits."

Stoddert's short reply of 25 August hardly served to satisfy their fondest hopes.

Gent^{n} I am honored with the receipt of your Letter of the 17th [sic] Instant, describing your two Ships *America* & *Bellisarius*; and offering to dispose of them for the service of the United States; but it is not in my power to purchase them; for by the Acts of Congress, The President can only procure by purchase, or accept on the Condition of paying in 6 per cent Stock Vessels now building or to be built.—

Of the Number of Vessels thus authorized; there remains now to be provided, only one not exceeding 18 Guns, and one not less than 32 Guns—I hope the Town of Salem, no less important, and whose Citizens are considered to possess as much patriotism as those of other Towns, who have taken the lead of them in this respect, will supply one of the two Vessels yet to be obtained, on the condition of receiving payment in 6 per cent Stock; and if you Gentlemen will endeavour to

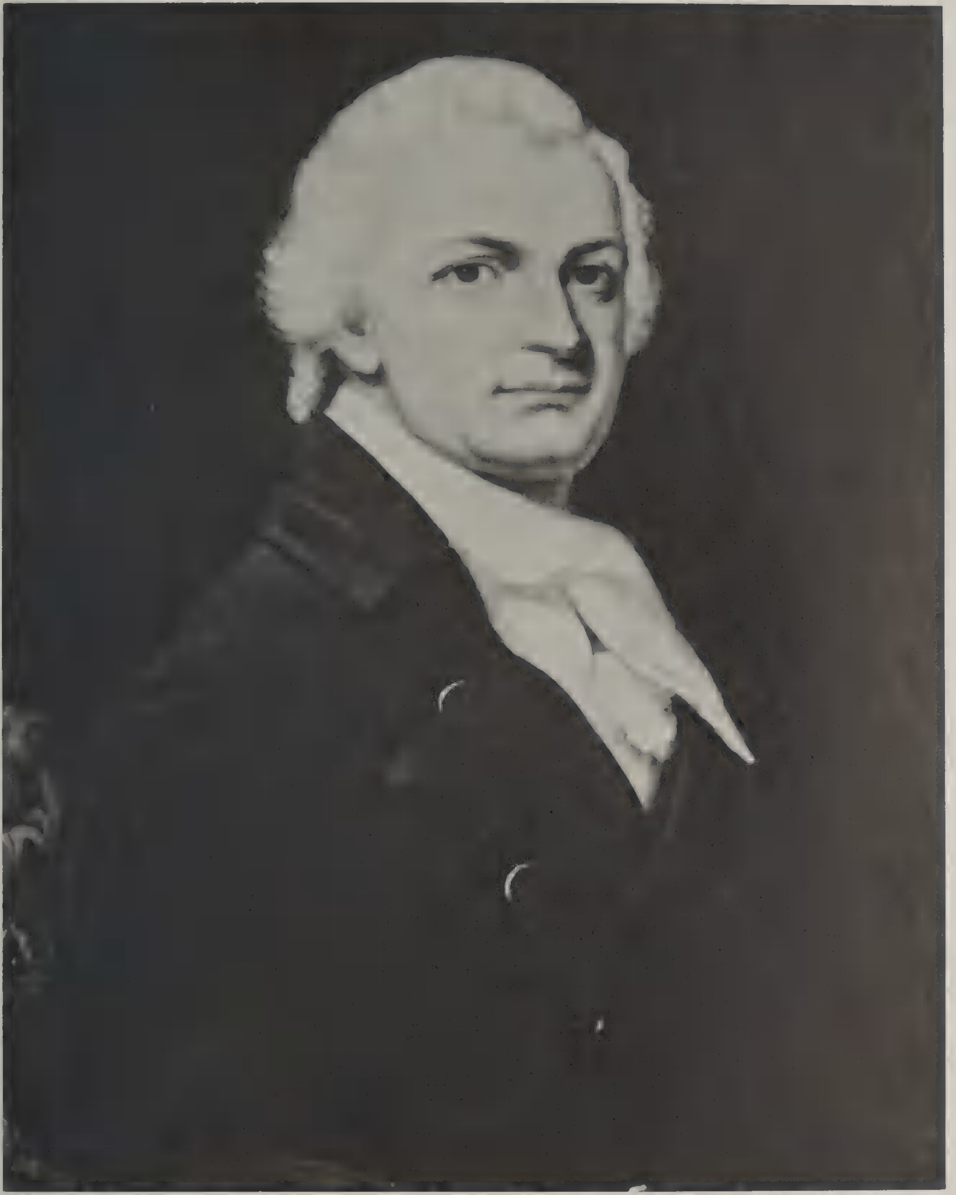


FIG. 7. Georgetown merchant and first Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert (1751–1813).

> bring this about, you will render essential service to your Country, at a time when it requires the aid of all virtuous men.—
>
> The Ships preparing for the public are generally Copper bolted, & sheathed with Copper; and it is generally understood, that the Hull, Rigging and Sails are to be completed by the Citizens furnishing them; and that when delivered to the public they be ready to receive their Guns.
>
> It is desireable, that the 18 Gun Vessel still wanted, should be able to carry 18 nine pound Cannon on the Gun deck; for this purpose she should measure between 300 & 400 Tons—

Angered and convinced that Stoddert had still misinterpreted the offer, George Crowninshield wrote directly to President Adams, enclosed copies of his correspondence with Stoddert, and packed the lot off under the personal supervision of Captain Ben Crowninshield. His firm, he said, "had no idea of offering the two Ships for Sale, our intention was, *and still is*, to present them to Government *as a loan*, if they should be deemed worthy of acceptance, the obvious inference is, that we should, in this case, expect to receive '6 p^{r} Cent Stock' in payment."

> We shall be always happy [he went on] to render every service in our power to our Country, and will not be the last to join in bringing about any measures calculated for its assistance, but Sir it must strike you, as natural enough, that in respect to procuring vessels of force, We as a family, can do no more than we have now offered, and should they not be accepted we as Citizens of the town of Salem, attatched to its honor and general good charecter, shall always regret, that we can not be gratified with the idea of having contributed our mite to the scale of patriotic donations.

If the ships were not accepted, he added, already having forgotten the family's springtime determination of sending no more property to sea, "we shall immediately employ the Ships on East India voyages."

The President's reply does not appear to have been committed to paper as it probably was given verbally to Captain Ben, but the answer may be assumed with absolute certainty. The *Belisarius* sailed from Salem Harbor on 13 September bound for Copenhagen, and the *America* followed her to sea within a matter of months.

The repulses met with by the Crowninshields were, frankly, entirely of their own making, for they continually chose to misinterpret what the Federal Government had been authorized to do. Stoddert had not misunderstood the substance of their offer and had made it politely clear why he was unable to accept it. President Adams could have done no more nor less. The whole affair rankled the Crowninshields exceedingly; their future deportment with respect to the Salem Frigate as well as to the President and to the Federalist Party can be summed up in two words: "sour grapes". Perhaps the feeling was mutual. Certainly they managed to incur the wrath of many of their contemporaries around Salem. When the *America* finally sailed for India, a paragraph appeared in the *Salem Gazette* which recapitulated the essence of the Crowninshields' offer and ended upon the note that "it has always appeared a little extraordinary that government refused so fair an opportunity of procuring ships so well calculated for war or defence, when the private estimation is that *building* such vessels will cost nearly as much again." An equally extraordinary parenthetical remark of an editorial nature, enclosed within square brackets, immediately followed. "The foregoing paragraph was communicated to us. We can only say, that among the numerous contracts which must be made in behalf of government, it would be surprising if a bad bargain were not sometimes made, or a good one lost. It is impossible for us to know in what class the refusal above alluded to should be placed."

There can be little doubt that the perseverance of the Crowninshields contributed to the lack of success enjoyed by Salem's first subscription paper although, when viewed from the vantage point of nearly two centuries, it may have been a blessing in disguise, because when work on the frigate actually got under way all the right people could be brought together at the right place at the right time. Those principal merchants who were in a position to pledge the large sums so essential to attract a sufficiency of smaller offerings had no reason to exhibit their generosity so long as there was any possibility that other arrangements may have been afoot. It is reasonable to assume an earlier and more spontaneous response to the summer subscription had the Crowninshields' two ships not entered the picture.

It cannot be entirely coincidental that within a fortnight of Stoddert's answer, the gist of which could not have remained secret in Salem for long, the subscription again began to show signs of life. Much of the credit for the renewed momentum, however, was due to the intervention of Secretary of State Timothy Pickering, himself a native of Salem, and fellow townsman Benjamin Goodhue, Senator from Massachusetts. On 25 August, when colleague Stoddert was writing to the Crowninshields, Pickering wrote to Goodhue who had returned home temporarily.

> Sometime ago we heard, by the news-papers, that a subscription for building

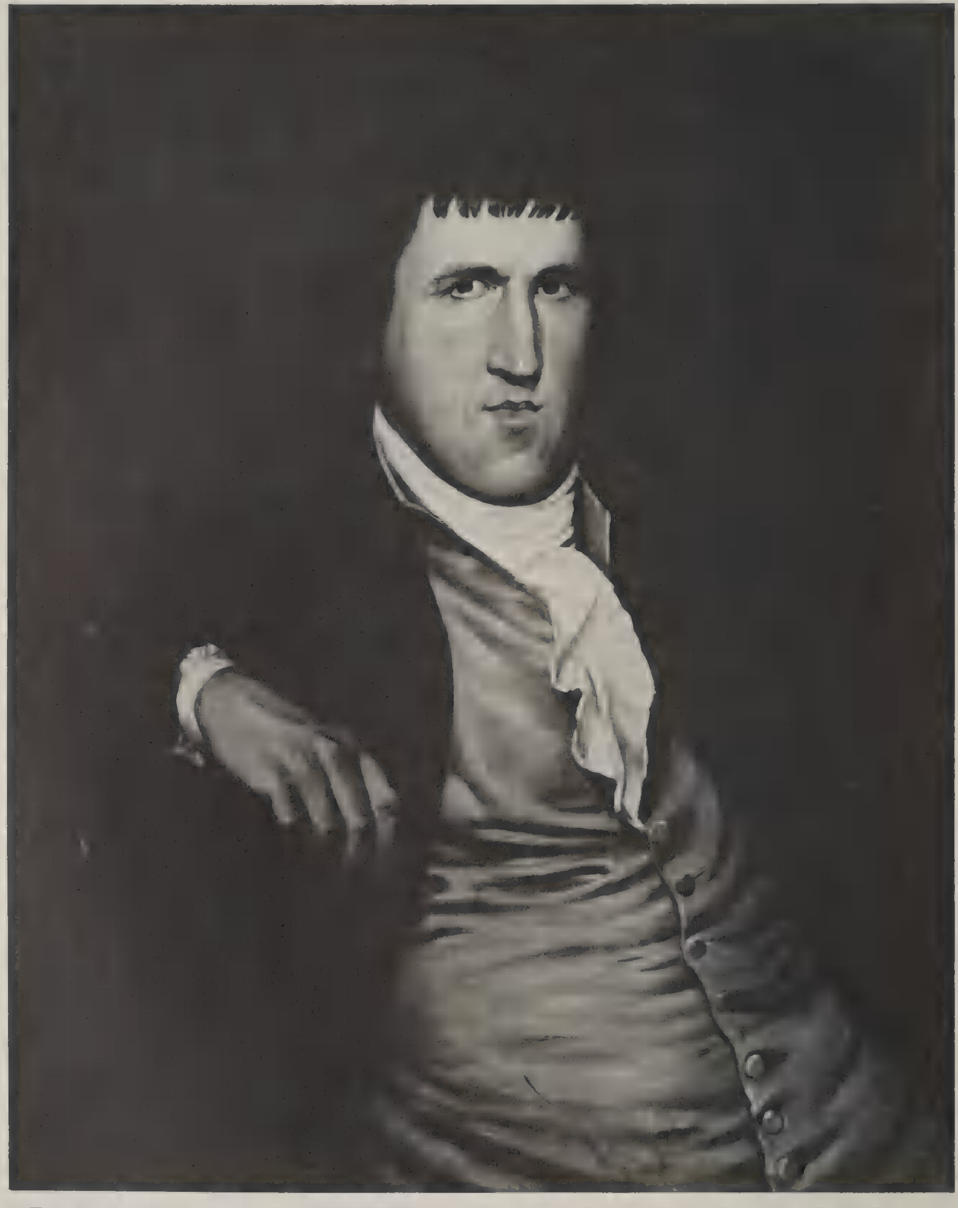


FIG. 8. Senator from Massachusetts Benjamin Goodhue (1748–1814). From an oil by George Southward, after J. Wright.

> an armed ship was on foot at Salem, to be loaned to the U. States. As no letters have since been received at the Navy-Office, and as the news-papers have since been silent, we suppose the merchants there will conduct this business as they do their own—very snugly—and by and by surprize the public with a frigate or other large ship built in the completest manner.
>
> If I have rightly understood the Secretary of the Navy, there are but two more ships to be accepted by the President, one of which might be of 18 guns, and the other of 32. The water at Salem will best suit the draught of the former: but if that should be the choice of the merchants, they may make an 18 gun ship very formidable, by giving her dimensions to carry twelve pounders—and at the least, nine pounders. If she were to carry 18 twelves, she might besides (I suppose) carry six six-pounders—or what would be better six 24^{lb} carronades. . . .

After a full page devoted to extolling the virtues of carronades, he got to the point. "What," he asked, "is doing at Salem on the subject of this letter? Is a subscription going on? Is it filled? What is the sum subscribed? What kind of ship is contemplated to be built? You will oblige me by giving me full information."

Obviously, Benjamin Stoddert had put him up to it, for such questions most concerned a Secretary of the Navy, not State, and who could pry more information out of one Salemite than another? Stoddert had been hoping for some kind of commitment from Salem for over a month. Goodhue's reply on the first of September put the situation into perspective at last.

> When I first got home I found there had been a while before a subscription for building a Ship handed about but the amount subscribed being but 15.000$ a sum so inadequate that the matter has been asleep ever since—on enquiring of some Gentlemen how the sum came to be so small I was told that it was first handed to M^r [Elias Hasket] Derby who put down only $5000 and he being consider,d the richest deter,d others from puting down sums which they otherwise would have done, this morning I receiv,d yours of 25 Ult^o, and have shewn it to M^r Derby and M^r [William] Gray and will shew it to others, the former said he calculated on the cost of a 20 Gun ship to be $50,000 and estimating his commercial capital to 1/10 of the Town he had subscribed in that proportion—his sons being present observ,d that he was 2/10th of the trade and his subscription ought to have been in that ratio, and from what pass,d I am inclined to believe he will still come forward at that rate, M^r Gray told me he was deter,d from subscribing more than what he did on account of M^r Derbys not being more but that a Ship We must have and should have and if others did not subscribe a sufficient sum he would, thus the matter is at present I suppose a meeting will be called

in a day or two, when I shall be able to give you further information—I have very little doubt from the spirited conversation of M^r Gray who could build such a Ship and not feel it, that a Ship of 20 Nine pounders will be built, in such a case it would be gratifying to the Merchants to have the nomination of the Officers and the public probably be as well or better served and the Crew by that means be much sooner got in this Neighbourhood—I will write you in a few days more fully after the Gentlemen have had their meeting—

Almost concurrently, the Reverend William Bentley renewed his private complaints about the lack of initiative displayed by the town. The fort on Winter Island at the entrance of the harbor lay neglected, the local regiment was disorganized, and "the subscription for building a Ship unsigned & lost & not one public measure pursued excepting a petition to know how much the U.S. will do in finishing the fortifications." Within a week, nevertheless, the proddings at the consciences of Elias Hasket Derby and of William Gray bore sufficient promise to cause the *Salem Gazette* on 7 September to sound an optimistic note once more. Bentley's remarks, as usual, were even more expansive. "Expectations are now strongly excited that Salem will produce a frigate. Mr. Gray offers to subscribe 9/10ths of the sum subscribed by Mr. Derby."

The revival of interest resulted in the publication in the *Gazette* on 14 September of communications by two readers. One, a half-witted epistle from a resident of neighboring Beverly, signed "A Shoreman," attempted an altogether unnecessary and barbed justification of his town's want of public munificence, claiming poverty (but no lack of patriotism), and proposing facetiously that if the government would take "*good Grand Bank Fish*," a loan of 16,000 quintals at six percent could be forthcoming. The other, by "A Salemite," was more appropriate and to the point. It reflected the question uppermost in the community conscience, and, at the same time, gave a gentle boot to the sensitivities of local pride. "Some of your correspondents, *who feel for the honor of the town of Salem*, wish to be informed of the probable size and force of the ship, which is to be built from that, or any other subscription—whether she is to equal the one which is building, and which is in so good forwardness, at Newburyport—or whether her dimensions will rise in some proportion to that increase in wealth and ability with which the enterprizing spirit of the merchants of Salem has of late been succeeded."

Finally, after three months of stagnation, things began to happen. The *Gazette* of 18 September reported: "We have the pleasure to notice, that several of the subscribers for building a ship of war in this town have lately come forward again, and doubled their first subscriptions: and we are told they are ready to make still further additions should it be necessary—Such expressions of love of country deserve public acknowledgement." By the evening of Thursday the twentieth, "the mercury of patriotism" had placed $36,000 upon the paper, more than double the amount of the first one, and was "still rising." During the next two weeks names continued to be added to the list, and on Tuesday, 2 October, a team of canvassers began knocking on doors, encouraging support even for such small sums as ten dollars. The next day, Benjamin Goodhue acquainted the Secretary of the Navy of the revival of the subscription and to Timothy Pickering wrote that "with pleasure I inform you that the subscription for building a Vessel goes on lately with Spirit it has already got to $63.000 and probably with in a few days be much larger one [a ship] of 32 Guns is contemplated." Within the next several days the amount increased by an additional two thousand dollars but then faltered again. "We in this Town," the Reverend Bentley remarked after referring to the recent launch of the Newburyport subscription ship *Merrimack*, "are yet subscribing but have not yet reached the sum which instantly gave strength to the Carpenters of the *Merrimack*. Some subscribe here to pay in work, in which way a Ship would be a dear acquisition to the States. The characters of such subscribers are well known & sometimes they avow their intentions." At length, $74,700 lay pledged upon the paper.

The original document, now unaccounted for, would of course have shown the order in which the citizens signed their names; as it is, the surviving copies do not always agree with respect to the order of signing or to the final amounts paid in. From all indications, however, William Gray, Jr. signed it first, followed by Elias Hasket Derby, William Orne, John Norris, John Jenks, Ebenezer Beckford, and Benjamin Pickman, and reached a total of some $35,000 from these men alone. The inconsistencies of the extant lists are unreconcilable today due to missing documents and to the numerous transfers between subscribers for payment of debts prior to submission of an amended account sent to the Loan Office in November 1800 for the issuance of stock.

The alphabetical listing given below is, from the best information now available, a complete muster, save for "A Lady" who soon vanished from the accounts, of those who pledged themselves during the early autumn of 1798 to build a Salem Frigate. Those names followed by an asterisk (*) never found their way into the Loan Office copy. The men's dates are added here for the sake of general interest, as are their known occupations at the time of the subscription.

Edward Allen, Jr. (1763–1845)	Shipmaster	$500
William Appleton* (1764–1822)	Cabinetmaker	50
Samuel Archer (1768–1813)	Hardware merchant	100
Jacob Ashton (1744–1829)	Merchant	1000
Thomas Bancroft (1766–1808)	Clerk of the Courts	100
Capt. John Barr (1758–1832)	Merchant	600
Walter Price Bartlett (1743–1824)	Auctioneer	100
Nathaniel Batchelder* (? –1810)	Dry goods shopkeeper	50
John Beckett (1746–1804)	Boatbuilder-sparmaker	100
Ebenezer Beckford (1737–1816)	Merchant	2000
Enos Briggs* (1746–1819)	Shipbuilder	50
Samuel Brooks* (1758–1805)	Dry goods merchant	50
[Samuel] Buffum (1744–1818) & [John] Howard (1755–1848)	Sailmakers	550
Maj. Joseph Cabot* (1770–1799)	Merchant	500
Capt. Benjamin Carpenter (1751–1823)	Merchant	500
Capt. Thomas Chipman* (1756–1821)	Shipmaster	100
Capt. Clifford Crowninshield* (1762–1809)	Shipmaster-merchant	500
Thomas C. Cushing* (1764–1824)	Editor, *Salem Gazette*	50
John Daland* (1768–1842)	Mariner-storekeeper	100
Elias Hasket Derby (1739–1799)	Merchant	10000
Elias Hasket Derby, Jr. (1766–1826)	Shipmaster	300
Ezekiel Hersey Derby (1772–1852)	Merchant	1000
John Derby (1741–1812)	Merchant	1000
Richard Derby, Jr. (1765–1832)	Shipmaster	1500
Capt. George Dodge (1750–1821)	Merchant	1000
Capt. Israel Dodge (1740–1822)	Merchant & distiller	500
Capt. Ephraim Emmerton (1748–1824)	Merchant	100
Benjamin Felt* (1770–1854)	Pump & blockmaker	100
Edmund Gale (1751–1831)	Grog & victualling shopkeeper	10
Benjamin Goodhue* (1748–1814)	U.S. Senator	800
James Gould* (1736–1810)	Gun carriage maker	50
Samuel Gray (1760–1816)	Merchant	2000

William Gray, Jr. (1750–1825)	Merchant	10000
Col. John Hathorne* (1748–1834)	Dry goods shopkeeper	200
Joseph Hiller (1748–1814)	Collector of the Port	300
Capt. Benjamin Hodges (1754–1806)	Merchant	500
Edward Augustus Holyoke (1728–1829)	Physician	800
Daniel Jenks* (1756–1834)	Dry goods shopkeeper	500
John Jenks (1751–1817)	Dry goods shopkeeper	1550
Asa Killam (1752–1813) ($20 transferred to Joseph Waters)	Lumber dealer	–
Edward Killin (? – ?)	Shopkeeper	100
James King (1752–1831)	Cashier, Essex Bank	500
Jonathan Lambert* (1742–1804)	Shipmaster	40
Capt. Peter Lander* (1743–1834)	Shipmaster-merchant	200
Lane & Son	Sailmakers	(In work)
Edward Symmes Lang* (1775–1833)	Apothecary	100
Abel Lawrence (1754–1822)	Distiller	500
William Luscomb (1774–1820)	House & ship painter	300
Samuel Daniels McIntire (1741– ?)	Carpenter	100
Richard Manning (1731–1811)	Capitalist	1000
Richard Manning, Jr. (1754–1813)	Blacksmith-stablekeeper	200
William Marston* (1751–1818)	West India goods merchant	250
Capt. Jonathan Mason* (1757–1808)	Merchant	50
John Morong* (? – ?)	Trader	50
Capt. Joseph Mosely (1760–1799)	Shipmaster	100
Capt. John Murphy (1753?–1800?)	Shipmaster	500
Capt. Jonathan Neal (1759–1837)	Shipmaster	2000
Joseph Newhall* (1768–1827)	Tinsmith	100
Capt. Ichabod Nichols (1749–1839)	Merchant	1000
John Norris (1751–1808)	Merchant-distiller	5000
Capt. William Orne (1751/2–1815)	Merchant	5000
Henry Osborn* (1766–1820)	Storekeeper	50
Isaac Osgood (? – ?)	Gentleman	500
Capt. John Osgood (1757–1826)	Merchant	1000
Joseph Osgood, Jr. (1772–1806) ($25 transferred to Joseph Waters)	Shipmaster	–

Page & Ropes	Ship chandlers	100
Capt. David Patten* (1767–1805)	Shipmaster	50
Capt. Joseph Peabody (1757–1844)	Merchant	1500
Asa Peirce* (1761–1827)	Tailor	50
Nathan Peirce (1749–1812)	Merchant	250
Thomas Perkins (1758–1830)	Merchant	500
Capt. Stephen Phillips (1766–1838)	Shipmaster-merchant	1000
John Pickering (1740–1811)	Registrar of Deeds	200
Benjamin Pickman (1740–1819)	Merchant, Town Treasurer	1650
Benjamin Pickman, Jr. (1763–1843)	Merchant	1500
William Prescott (1762–1844)	Lawyer	1000
Joshua Richardson (1750–1826)	Merchant	500
Samuel Ropes, Jr.* (1757–1841)	Trader	50
Brackley Rose (1767–1823)	Sugar baker	100
Thomas Sanders (1759?–1844?)	Merchant	500
Elijah Sanderson (1751–1825)	Cabinetmaker	100
Jacob Sanderson (1758–1810)	Cabinetmaker	100
Capt. Moses Townsend* (1760–1842)	Shipmaster	100
John Treadwell (1738–1811)	Shop owner	500
Capt. Edmund Upton (1769–1814)	Shipmaster	300
Upton & Porter*	Merchants	400
Capt. Samuel Very (1757?–1824?)	Baker-merchant	100
Joseph Vincent* (1735–1832)	Ropemaker	200
[Aaron] Wait (1742–1830) & [Jerathmiel] Peirce (1746/7–1827)	Merchants	2000
Jonathan Waldo (1754–1815)	Trader-merchant	40
Joshua Ward* (1752–1825)	Merchant-distiller	750
Capt. William Ward (1761–1827)	Shipmaster	500
Joseph Waters (1756–1833)	Merchant	460
Benjamin Webb, Jr. (1759–1827)	Shipmaster	100
Michael Webb (1762–1839) ($100 transferred to Stephen Webb)	Grocer-merchant	–
Stephen Webb (1756–1831)	Shipmaster	600
Capt. Thomas Webb (1756–1825)	Shipmaster	200
Capt. Timothy Wellman, Jr.* (1768–1834)	Shipmaster	100
Capt. Benjamin West, Jr.* (1768–1825)	Shipmaster	250

Nathaniel West (1756–1851)	Merchant	1500
Isaac Williams (name in receipts only)	Apothecary	50

The time was now at hand for the subscribers to meet and to decide for what purpose their money was to be spent.

NOTES

Jacob Crowninshield's letter of 22 April 1798 to his brother Richard is in the Crowninshield Papers at the Peabody Museum, a collection of account books, logbooks, and some seventy boxes of manuscript material. Another extensive collection of Crowninshield family manuscripts is owned by the Essex Institute, Salem.

McHenry's proposals, as well as other events leading to the creation of a significant American naval force, are contained in *Naval Documents . . . Quasi-War*, op. cit., volume I.

Details of the *America*'s background and acquisition come from logbooks of the second and third *America*s, at the Peabody Museum. They effectively explode the myth that the *America* III was purchased in France, although she was sold at Bordeaux in 1803.

From the letter of George Crowninshield & Sons to Benjamin Stoddert, 16 August 1798, in The Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, XLIX, 188, comes further information. She was a frigate-built ship (a factor of deck arrangement) of about 750 tons burden, "sails astonishingly fast . . . this Ship has heretofore been employed as a leading frigate in the French navy & was always sent on the most dangerous reconnoitering parties." She had ports cut between decks for twenty-four guns and a bulwark on the upper deck that ran the whole length of the ship for twenty additional guns. About seven years old in 1798, she measured 133 feet on the upper deck, 35 feet beam, and "more than man heigth between decks, has stout beams below for the Orlop deck, which is layed for'd & aft & fights her guns between decks. . . ." She was coppered, copper bolted, had entirely new spars and the greater part of her rigging lately renewed.

That the *America* was a fast sailer cannot be denied. In 1801, during a passage from Salem to the Indian Ocean, she crossed the Equator in 29° West Longitude twenty-one days out of Salem, made the Cape of Good Hope twenty-nine days later, and anchored at the Isle of France in seventy-six days fifteen hours from Salem. On another occasion, however, after having been long becalmed, her captain wrote plaintively in the log: "At 6 AM set Royals in hopes to coax or Couzin a wind, but we are not profest Whitches 'tho from Salem."

The *Belisarius* measured 270 tons, 94′6″ extreme length, twenty-five feet extreme breadth, and 12′6″ depth of hold. She had been coppered at Calcutta six months before being offered to the Government, was copper bolted, and mounted twenty guns on the gundeck. The Crowninshields considered her to be worth $25,000. She was eventually lost in a gale near Tunis in 1810.

The Crowninshield letter to Stoddert in The Adams Papers is accompanied by copies of Stoddert's reply and the Crowninshields' subsequent letter to President Adams. The latter two have been printed in *Naval Documents . . . Quasi-War*, I, 339 and 369–70.

Timothy Pickering's letter to Benjamin Goodhue is in the Pickering Papers (IX, 222), Massachusetts Historical Society, as is Goodhue's reply (XXIII, 107).

Benjamin Goodhue was the son of Benjamin and Martha (Hardy). He was born 20 September 1748, graduated from Harvard College in 1766, was a Whig during the Revolution, represented Essex County in the Massachusetts Senate from 1784 to 1789 when he was elected a Representative to the first United States Congress. In 1796, he was elected to the United States Senate, but in 1800 resigned his seat and retired to private life. He died at Salem on 28 July 1814.

William Gray, Jr. is said to have become the wealthiest merchant in the United States and its largest ship owner. He lived in a house on Essex Street, afterwards occupied by the Sun Tavern. Later, he built what became the Essex House a short distance up the street to the east, where he resided until he moved to Boston several years before the War of 1812. He was the son of Abraham and Lydia (Calley) and was born at Lynn on 27 June 1750. In early life, he came to Salem and entered the counting house of Richard Derby, father of Elias Hasket Derby. He became Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts from 1810–12 and died at Boston on 3 November 1825. His wife was Elizabeth Chipman of Marblehead.

Elias Hasket Derby was born at Salem on 16 August 1739, the son of Richard Derby and Mary (Hodges). He was educated in his father's counting house, by the time of the Revolution owned a number of privateers, and after his father's death became the leading merchant of Salem. In 1761 he married Elizabeth Crowninshield. He died 8 September 1799, three weeks before the *Essex* was launched.

The *Essex* Papers include three separate lists of the subscribers, two of which appear to have been working copies for the list sent to the Loan Office in November 1800 for the issuance of stock. The Essex Institute owns a fourth list, but the existence of the original subscription paper is not known.

The receipts given to subscribers upon payment of each of their eight installments, one of which is illustrated in Fig. 32, are preserved in The *Essex* Papers—complete sets for eighty-two of the ninety-nine subscribers. A handful of others have been separated from the main collection and may be found among Joseph Waters' manuscripts at the Essex Institute.

CHAPTER 3

The Frigate Committee Goes to Work

ON the morning of Friday, 19 October 1798, the regular semiweekly number of the *Salem Gazette* came off the press at Thomas C. Cushing's printing office on Essex Street, where its patrons, some of them no doubt fatigued by the ball held the previous evening in anticipation of President Adams' sixty-third birthday, milled about to discuss Federal politics and the deteriorating state of the world. By and large, this issue of the *Gazette* was an unusually dull one. Two-and-a-half columns on the front and second pages droned on about the recent history of plagues. Inside, there were fragmentary reports of British military actions against the French, that in July Nelson had engaged in another naval action, and that the long-coddled Dey of Algiers was finally dead. "Fresh India Goods" lately arrived in the *Belisarius* were being advertised by the Crowninshields; Elisha Doggett, the hairdresser, announced his removal to another shop; the government sought sealed bids from purveyors of clothing to supply the Army; William Lang was having an auction sale that afternoon; and from a Philadelphia newspaper there appeared a reprinted advertisement together with lurid endorsements for "Blackhead's Essence of Pitchfork."

Tucked away on the third page between "Ship News" and the notice of Lang's fabric vendue was a call, emphasized by a small, pointing hand, that was to set in motion the administrative machinery necessary to cause the Salem Frigate to be built.

> The Subscribers for building a Frigate, in this town, are requested to meet at the Court-House, at 6 o'clock this evening.

The same notice again made its appearance in the subsequent issue published the following Tuesday, 23 October. Over the weekend the subscribers had been mulling over the matter of the composition of the committee they would have to elect, and, as we may confidently suppose, had appointed one or more delegations to confer with frigate committees already established elsewhere, notably those overseeing the completion of the ships at Boston and at Newburyport.

Spurred on by the knowledge that Newburyport just ten days before had

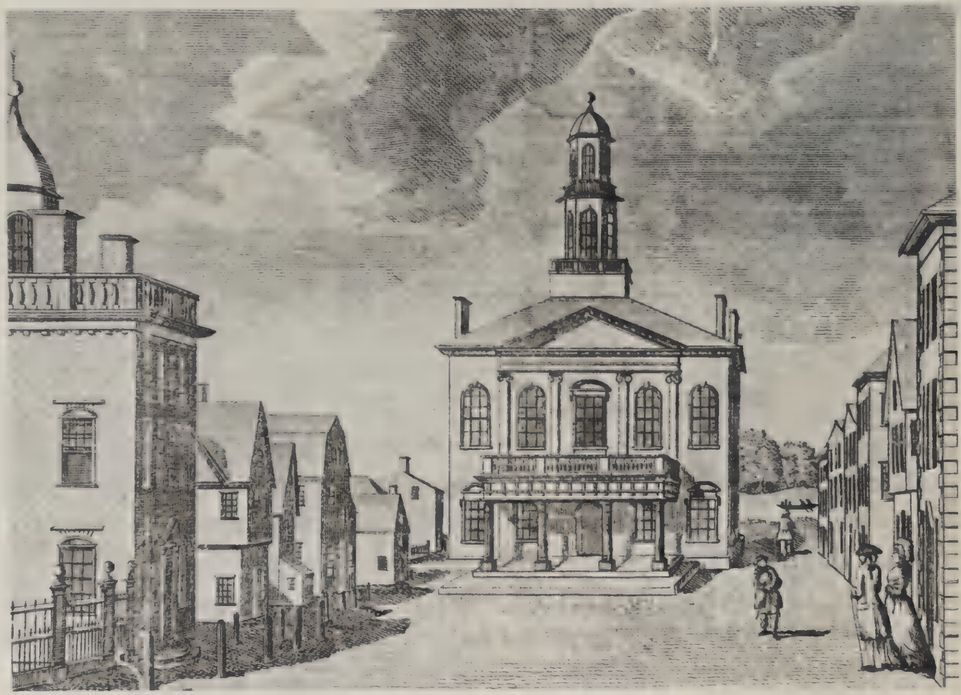


FIG. 9. The Court House, Salem, where the Salem Frigate subscribers met and reached the decision to build the *Essex*. The building stood in the center of modern Washington Street above the junction of Lynde and Church Streets. From an engraving by Samuel Hill in the *Massachusetts Magazine*, 1790.

not only launched its subscription ship *Merrimack* but had managed to build her in the incredibly short time of only seventy-four working days and also that the twenty-four-gun government-built ship *Portsmouth* had been launched recently at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the subscribers packed a chamber in the Court-House an hour after sunset on the night of the twenty-third of October. Perhaps with Senator Benjamin Goodhue acting as moderator—but we simply don't know for sure—a recent letter to Goodhue from Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert almost certainly must have been read out as one of the first orders of business, even if its content had already been made known at the previous meeting.

Navy Department October 9th 1798

Benj^n Goodhue Esq^r
Salem

Sir, I am honored with your Letter of the 3^rd Instant; and am highly gratified by the Information it contains—

The Gentlemen who Subscribe to the loan for the purpose of Building a Ship for Government, are so much better Judges than I am, of the best mode to be pursued, to get the Ship well, and expeditiously built, that I shall not pretend to interfere as to the mode proper for them to adopt.

If they appoint an Agent to conduct the Business, paying him a Salary or Commission, no doubt such expense must be considered as part of the Cost of the Ship, and paid for by Government, in Certificates bearing an Interest of 6 per Cent, as well as every other expense relating to the Ship—In short, the subscribers to the loan, will divise such plan as they deem best, in disposing of the Money Subscribed in building a Ship, and all the expense incurred in carrying such measure into execution, must be considered as the Cost of the Ship, and must be paid for by Government.—

It will be well for the subscribers, a Committee of the Subscribers, or the Agent, to determine as early as can be done, how far the money subscribed will go in Rigging, & equipping the Ship as a Vessel of War; & to mark distinctly to me what they will do, and what will remain for the Public to do; that arrangements may be made by me in time for such things as the public must supply, to prevent any delay in getting the Ship to Sea, after the subscribers turn her over to the Public—

It will be expected that the Subscribers will build and rigg the Ship. They will determine whether their money will hold out to furnish her with two Suits of Sails.—If not, one Suit must be furnished by the Public.—Should they however, be able to do this, they will then determine how far they will go in providing, first, Water Casks, next, Iron Ballast, then Guns, & so on to the complete equipment of a Vessel of War.—But unless Ship-Building be much cheaper at Salem, than in any other part of the United States,—or the Citizens of that place exceed all others in Liberality & Public Spirit, I suspect the private Contributions must Stop, with the Completion of the Ship to receive her Guns—and probably with one suit of Sails—

The model & dimensions of the Ship must be left with the Subscribers to determine;—I should be glad however, to be furnished with a Draft of her, that if she should turn out a fine Sailer, we may profit by it hereafter.—

The persons the Subscribers appoint to be their Agent, or any other person they recommend, shall be the Agent on the part of the Public to procure Such Articles as the public must Supply.—

The Ship should be Copper Bolted & sheathed—if Copper, or Composition Bolts can not be had to the Eastward—Mess^{rs} James & Ebenezer Watson of New York, will be able to supply them.—

I have said nothing about the size of the Ship, that being a point to be determined by the amount of the Subscription—But if she could be made a Frigate to carry 32 Guns every thing authorized by the Acts of Congress in relation to Ships would be obtained.—

The President being in Massachusetts, I cannot at this moment obtain his consent, that the Captain to Command the ship, and all the Officers shall be appointed by the Gentlemen who contribute to the Expense. But this is a measure so obviously right, and affords so infinitely the best chance of having the Ship well officered, that I am sure I risk nothing in undertaking for his chearful and hearty concurrence in it. The Gentlemen on their part, I am sure will consider the importance of brave, & active men, to the honor of our Navy.—

I expect to leave this for Maryland before I can have the pleasure of hearing from you in reply—and shall return with my Family to the seat of Government about the 10th of November.—

P.S. Should the services of the Captain be wanted at the commencement of the Ship, the Gentlemen will please to call into service the person they select.—His Pay &c^{a} will go on from that time.—

I have the honor
&c.

Following discussion, questions, and the inevitable trivia raised by the ever-present picayune members of such an assembly, the important question —for what purpose should the money be spent?—was put to a vote, whereupon "it was voted unanimously, to build a *Frigate* of thirty-two guns, and loan the same to Government." Next, individual men were elected to serve as the Frigate Committee, "to carry the vote into immediate effect." Those drafted were ship owner-merchant William (Billy) Gray, Jr., for Chairman; merchant and distillery-owner John Norris; merchant Jacob Ashton; former master of the Derby ships *Astrea* and *Grand Turk* Captain Benjamin Hodges; and his business partner, Salem-born but Portsmouth-raised Ichabod Nichols. Finally, influential Town Treasurer Benjamin Pickman would double as the Committee's Treasurer. Goodhue, of course, could accept no such honor due to the necessity of his attendance at Congress in Philadelphia. Elias Hasket Derby must have indicated a desire to keep clear of the Committee either for reasons of diplomacy or business, or, more likely, because of increasing but generally unrecognized inclemencies of health. None of the Crowninshields could be considered, for none of the important ones had subscribed a penny.

Once formal delegation of authority passed from the subscribers to the Frigate Committee, Gray immediately set to work. A competent man of experience would have to be engaged to design the ship and to superintend the

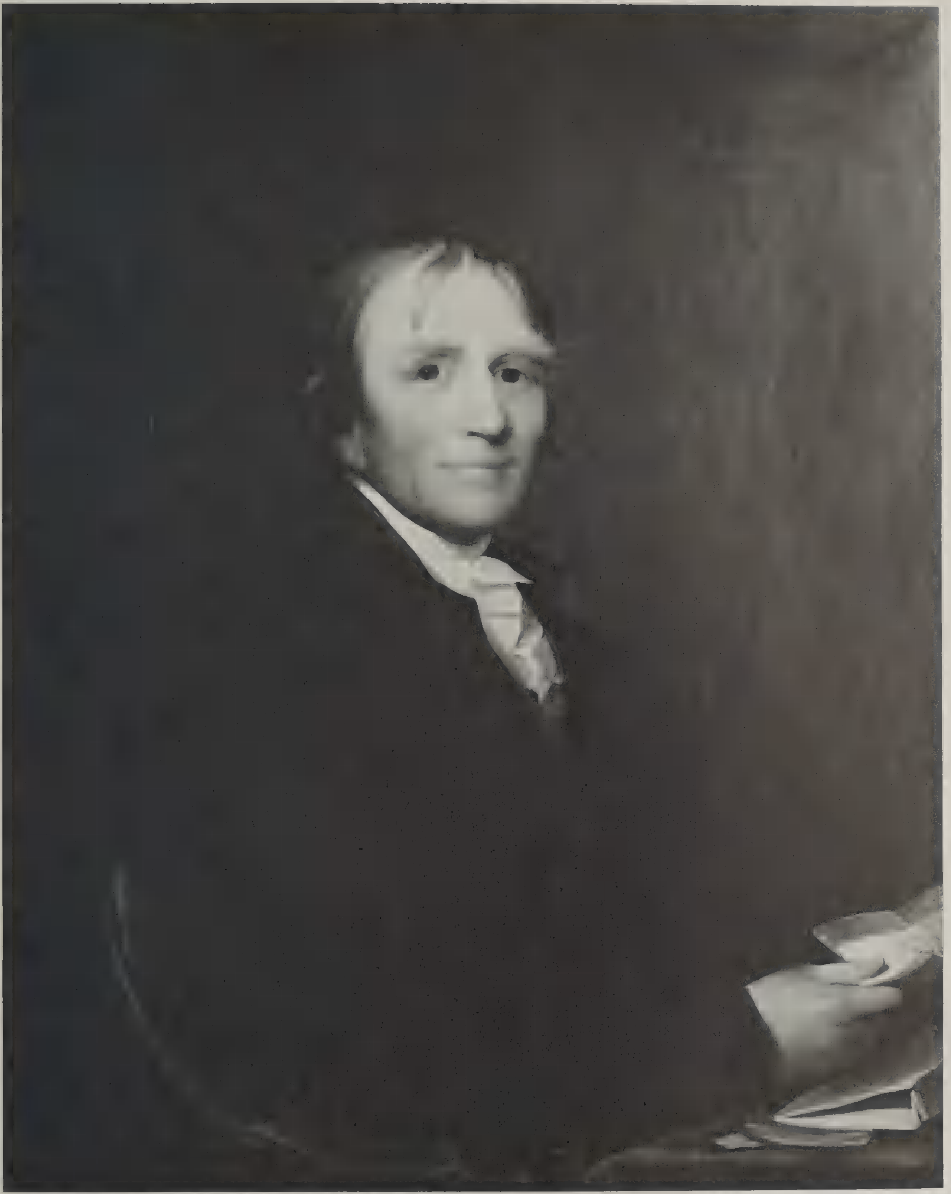


Fig. 10. William (Billy) Gray, Jr. (1750–1825), one of the two largest contributors to the frigate subscription fund and Chairman of the Salem Frigate Committee. From an oil portrait after Gilbert Stuart.

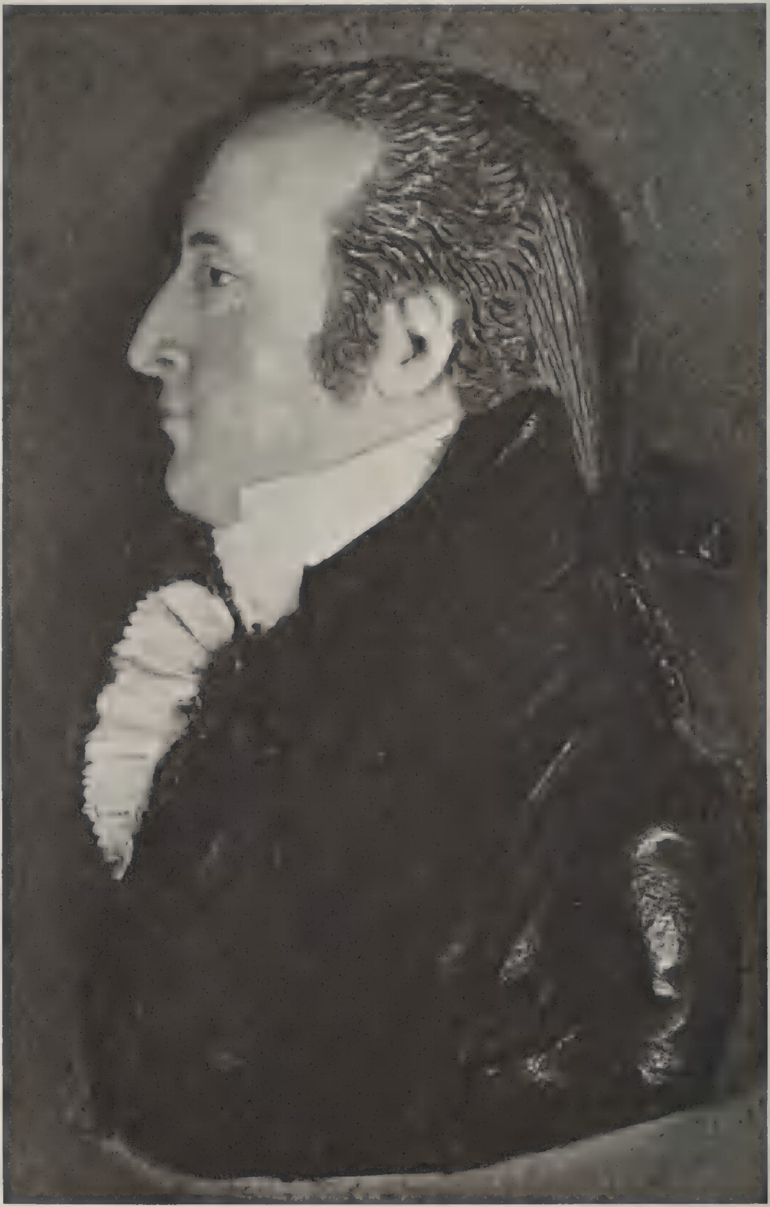


FIG. 11. Benjamin Pickman (1740–1819), Treasurer of the Salem Frigate Committee. From a wax portrait by John Christian Rauschner.

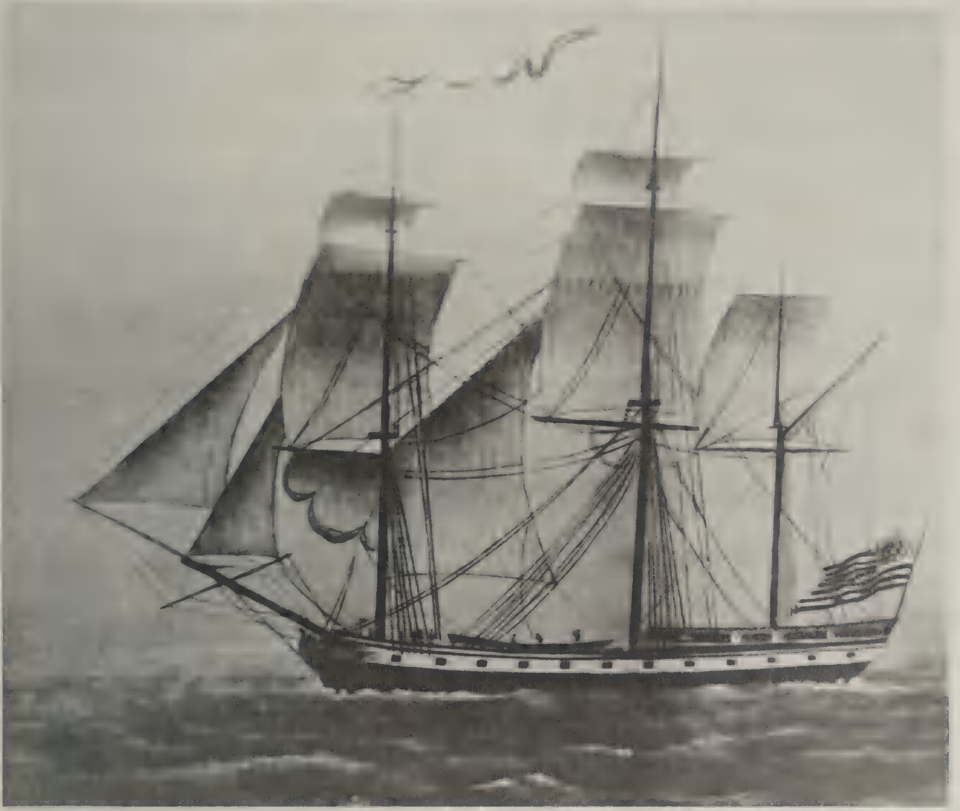


FIG. 12. The sloop of war *Merrimack*, designed by William Hackett and built by subscription of the merchants of Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1798.

construction. Judging from the speed with which the Committee acted, it appears there was never any doubt in anyone's mind who he should be. On behalf of the others, Gray composed a letter and had it placed on the Newburyport stage the following morning, Wednesday, 24 October, to ensure immediate delivery. The man in question was Captain (a military title) William Hackett of Salisbury, Massachusetts, who had just launched the *Merrimack* at Newburyport and who, presumably, would shortly be out of work.

> Being one of the Committee for Building a Frigate in this Town I am desired by them, to request you will come to Salem, as soon as you can as we wish to consult you upon that Business, & will pay your expense & for your time of Coming &c—You will call upon any of us. we will wait upon you imedeately.

Surprisingly little of a substantive nature has been discovered about William Hackett's professional life to distinguish readily his work from that of a presumed cousin, Colonel James Hackett, with whom he often has been confused. The confusion is by no means the child of modern historians but is of such long standing that even Billy Gray persisted in addressing William Hackett as "Major" throughout their work on the *Essex* during the years 1798 and 1799. To complicate matters even further, there had been three Hacketts all engaged in similar endeavors—John, also of Salisbury and a kinsman of William's; James, who, by the time the *Essex* was built, had become firmly entrenched as Superintendent at the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Navy Yard; and William himself.

William, however, had an Achilles' heel, not shared by the others. For some years he had been subject to periods of temporary insanity, a circumstance that previously had excluded him by name from consideration of becoming Constructor of the frigate *Constitution*. One must now entertain the possibility that Gray and the Committee shared the general confusion and summoned William by mistake, not discovering the error until it was too late to withdraw gracefully, yet, although such a possibility exists, it nonetheless is extremely unlikely, for William Hackett's professional reputation was too well known locally to admit such a drastic miscalculation. Fortunately for everyone, however, no trace of Hackett's old complaint seems to have manifested itself during the many months he was to spend in Salem.

Born on the first of May 1739 at Salisbury on the opposite side of the Merrimac River from Newburyport, William and his three brothers (Theophilus, Joseph, and Thomas) grew up in their father William's shipyard. "Early in Life," Hackett later wrote in feeble-minded old age, he "was Disposed to obtain the arte of Ship building, and at 12 years of age P[ ] with his farther to Leve School, & go into his S[hip] Yard. . . ."

Two years afterwards, however, his father died suddenly while down east at Sheepscot on a lumber trip. Six weeks later his grief-stricken mother was dead as well. Presumably, young William remained in the Salisbury area working in the neighboring shipyards, yet the next word we have of him is as a lieutenant in charge of a company of carpenters "Employed in Building the Raddeau at Lake George" in July 1759 during the French and Indian War. In 1760, he returned home and married Nanny Osgood. Throughout the remainder of the decade he was busily engaged at his own yard, on property inherited from his father, building primarily small fifty- to fifty-five-ton schooners for the North Shore fisheries. After he "Set up the bisenes him

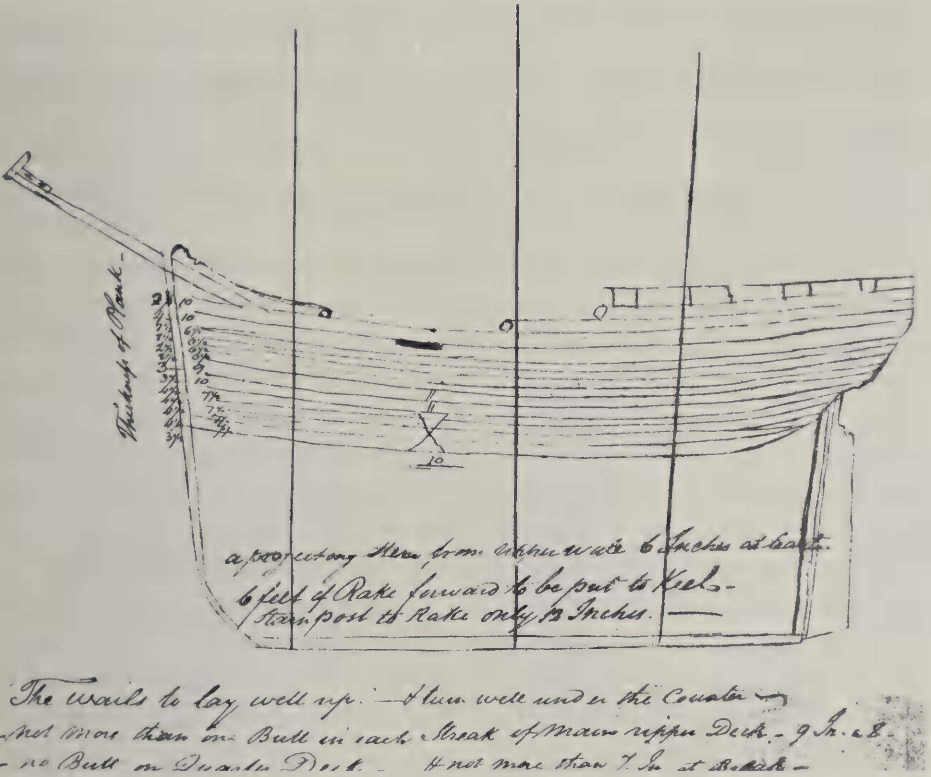

Thickness of Plank -
10
a projecting Stem, from upper wale 6 Inches at least.
6 feet of Rake forward to be put to Keel.-
Sternpost to Rake only 12 Inches. —
The wales to lay well up. — & turn well under the Counter —
In.-not more than one Butt in each Streak of Main upper Deck.- 9 In. & 8-
In- no Butt on Quarter Deck. - & not more than 7 In at Bulkhead –

FIG. 13. Working sketch of a merchant ship designed and drawn by William Hackett.

Self," he went on, he "took Pains to find the bes Mathord to form Ships for Sailing, & has bult a N° of Warlike Ships both for this State & the Continent. . . ."

The "Warlike Ships" included many celebrated vessels of the Revolutionary War—the Massachusetts State Navy brigantine *Massachusetts* and sloop (later brigantine) *Tyrannicide*, both built at Salisbury in 1776; John Paul Jones' famous sloop of war *Ranger*, built at Portsmouth, N. H., in 1777 by "cousin" James from designs believed to have been prepared by William; the seventy-four-gun ship of the line *America*, in which James was also a principal, constructed at Portsmouth between 1777 and 1782 and presented to the French government; and the Continental frigate *Alliance*, designed by, and, together with John Hackett, built by him at Salisbury in 1778.

Between 1786 and 1792 when he was superintending the construction of two merchant vessels at Portsmouth, the one for Jacob Sheafe and the other for Edward Jones, the principal vessel to absorb his attention was the formidable 600-ton merchantman *Massachusetts*, launched at Germantown, Quincy, in September 1789 for a group of Boston merchants led by old China-trade hands Captain Thomas Randall and Major Samuel Shaw of *Empress of China* fame. At one time said by the captain of an English frigate to have been "as perfect a model as the state of the art will permit," the *Massachusetts* was calculated to emulate the magisterial luxury of a British "Honourable Company" East Indiaman. Yet, despite what was acknowledged as an especially inspired design, she proved too big and too ostentatious for the scale of Boston's Oriental trade and was subsequently sold to the Danes at Canton, an experiment that prejudiced most ship owners against vessels of her size for many years to come.

It would seem that from the mid-1790's until he was legally declared "a distracted person" some half a dozen years later he no longer engaged himself for actual construction of vessels but hired out his services as consultant, designer, and superintendent wherever his experience was required.

When summoned by the Salem Frigate Committee, his superintendence on the *Merrimack* was nearing completion. In light of history, it was a happy coincidence for everyone. Hackett appeared in Salem almost exactly a week later, secured lodgings at Benjamin Webb's tavern on Essex Street opposite Market, presently Central, Street, and made contact with the Committee. The two parties speedily reached a mutually agreeable arrangement. He went into pay as of Tuesday, 30 October 1798.

His movements locally cannot be traced with any precision, yet without any doubt whatever, he was spoon-fed by Gray and the Committee, whisked off on tours of the shipyards, potential construction sites, and was given every opportunity to form objective judgments about the capabilities of the local duck manufactory, sparmakers, boat builders, blacksmiths, the availability of timber supplies, waterfront facilities, and the handful of master shipwrights then being considered for the job of Master Carpenter and Constructor. On 6 November, he and Ichabod Nichols went off together to Boston, perhaps to confer with members of the Boston frigate committee; then returned hurriedly to Salem the following day. The day after that, 8 November, Hackett hopped the Newburyport stage and went home to Salisbury to begin working up his design.

Just how the Frigate Committee came to decide who the master carpenter was to be cannot be determined precisely, although much may be surmised from the composition of the Committee itself and from the local considerations it faced at the time. In all probability, the clear choice was evident from the start, but in any case if the Committee were to select someone already well-established in Salem, it had only three alternatives.

One was Ebenezer Mann, just turned forty, who had come to Salem from Pembroke, Massachusetts, toward the end of the Revolution, and in 1783 launched the first two vessels from his shipyard at Frye's Mills. Since then, he had built about thirty others, including three for John Norris and two for Billy Gray, but the largest vessel he had built for anyone was the unorthodox ship *Hazard* of 215 tons, just launched the tenth of September past for John and Richard Gardner. Considerable comment about her already had made the rounds about town, for, as was obvious to anyone who saw her, she had been built upon a peculiar model and offended the sensibilities of many a conservative critic. Mann, himself, may very well have been looked upon with the same jaundiced eye as a result, and lately, besides, he had been exhibiting signs of increasing alienation from the shipbuilding trade. He was toying with the idea of going into the grocery business and to let another Pembroke man, an apprentice by the name of Christopher Turner, take over the yard. In short, Mann's fragile prospects for successful completion of a ship four times the size of any he had ever attempted before must have caused the Committee to have accorded him only passing notice, if that.

The second possibility—a much better one—was Retire Beckett, a native of the town and one of the latest in a virtually unbroken line of Salem shipbuilding, boatbuilding, and sparmaker Becketts since great-great-grandfather John developed the family yard during the middle of the seventeenth century. "Tirey" Beckett was forty-four years old in 1798. He was looked upon as something of a "queer bird" who, in the words of a contemporary, early in life "discovered a singularity of character, & was betrayed into some unchaste connections. This gave him an odd turn, & he forsook society . . . but he has been distinguished by great industry, great practical skill in shipbuilding & great fidelity." Beckett's odd turn had not affected his work, although until five or six years prior to 1798 new contracts had been erratic; furthermore, he had launched but a dozen vessels to Ebenezer Mann's thirty-odd.

Even though no one on the Committee had personally contracted with him for new work, each member nevertheless knew his professional star was in the ascendancy. Beckett had built for many of their friends and competitors—Robert Stone, Benjamin West, Timothy Wellman, Richard Crowninshield, and others—and had been favored three times with contracts by Elias Hasket Derby, the latest of which, and Beckett's *pièce de résistance* to date, was the 356-ton ship *Mount Vernon*, then awaiting a launch at the crest of the spring tide on the morning of 22 November. *Mount Vernon*, herself a diminutive frigate, had been pierced for twenty guns. Beckett had built her in five months.

It is likely that the Frigate Committee never offered him the work; if it did, Beckett, for reasons best known to himself, declined. The year 1799 was to prove the busiest of his career, to the respectful astonishment of the Reverend Bentley who was to remark that winter: "Mr. Retire Becket has engaged *three vessels in his Building yard*. A *Keel piece* was brought on Saturday of *walnut* measuring 64 feet." These were major jobs—the brig *Antelope* for Derby, the ship *Active* for George Nichols and Committeeman Benjamin Hodges, and a new ship *Hazard* for the Gardners to replace Mann's fiasco of the previous year.

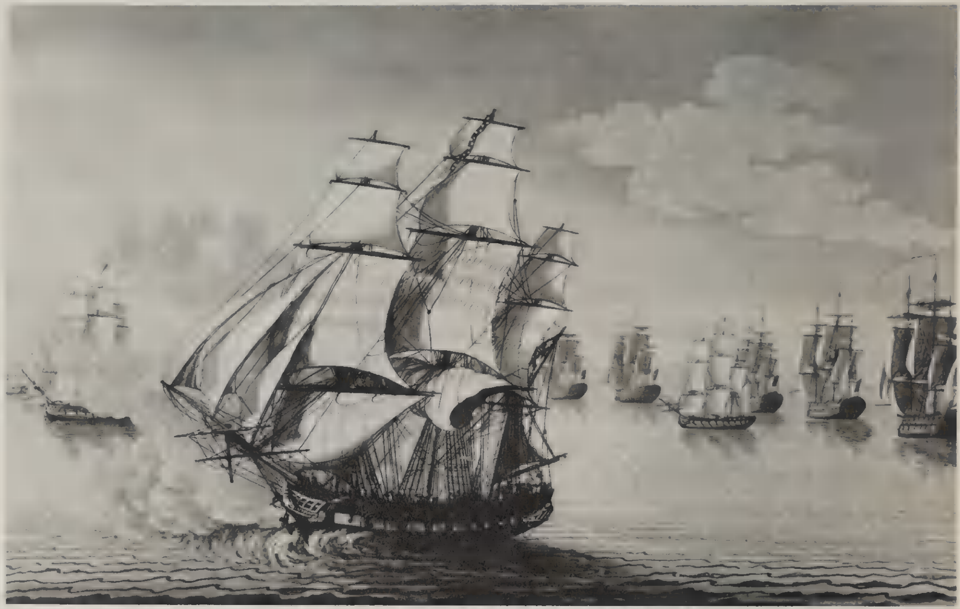


FIG. 14. The ship *Mount Vernon*, built at Salem in 1798 by Retire Beckett for Elias Hasket Derby. From a gouache by Michele Felice Cornè, circa 1799.

If the Committee never seriously considered Beckett in the running, as may have been the case, it must have based its judgment upon his relative in-experience, his creditably good workmanship but a consistent and offsetting record of incredibly sloppy launches, and even, perhaps, an awareness of a haphazard business sense that four years later would cause Beckett to declare himself bankrupt and to lose his ancestral shipyard.

The third and final choice was unquestionably the best man for the job —fifty-two-year-old Enos Briggs of South Fields, the section of Salem on the far side of the South River channel, facing the wharves. It is tempting to speculate that Derby himself insisted upon Briggs inasmuch as it was he who first introduced him to Salem in 1790 and had been one of his most ardent patrons ever since. Yet, lacking any such endorsement, Enos Briggs had earned on his own merits the responsibility of becoming Master Carpenter for the Salem Frigate. The Committee gave it to him, apparently with pleasure and unbridled enthusiasm.

Like Ebenezer Mann, he was a native of the North River area southeast of Boston in Plymouth County, long famous as a cradle of ships. Briggs had been born at Pembroke and was the eldest of a large family that included six sons. His father, Seth, built vessels at the "Brick Kiln" yard on the Pembroke side of North River, where Enos and his brothers served their apprenticeships. Shipbuilding was a family business. Uncles John and James Briggs pursued the same calling at their Hobart Landing yard where Scituate and Marshfield intersect the river. Uncle James, with Enos' brother Daniel, had also been instrumental in the building of the ship *Massachusetts* for which William Hackett had been designer and superintendent.

When their father retired, Elisha and Alden took over the Brick Kiln yard. Both would come to Salem in 1799 to assist their brother with the *Essex*. The older brothers soon began to seek their fortunes elsewhere, and during the course of time touched at many shipbuilding communities along Massachusetts Bay and beyond—Braintree, Medford, Milton, Newburyport, Salem, and Weymouth.

Elias Hasket Derby was intimately familiar with North River yards. His famous China-trader *Astrea*, the same that had borne to Salem the first news to reach the United States of the signing of the Treaty of Paris which ended the Revolutionary War, had been a product of Pembroke yards. So, in 1790, he prevailed upon Enos Briggs to come to Salem to build for him his answer to the ship *Massachusetts*, the 560-ton ship *Grand Turk*, the second of the name and, like the first, intended for an East India and China trader. By the time Derby's "Great Ship" had been launched from beside his wharf in May the following year, Briggs had also completed for him the brig *Henry*, and, in the meantime, had become enamored of Salem.

Convinced that a more profitable future lay in wait for him there than at home where there was a multiplicity of shipbuilders, he decided to settle permanently. He hired ground, which two years later he purchased from Billy Gray and Jerathmiel Pierce, on Stage Point in South Fields, remained in the vicinity just long enough after the launch of the *Grand Turk* to oversee his yard gang raise a schooner for Francis Bowden Dennis, and then set off for Pembroke to collect his family and belongings.

Traditionally, when he returned to Salem in July 1791 aboard a coasting sloop it bore not only Sarah Briggs and the five children of which their family then consisted but also the frame of the house he proposed to erect on Harbor Street, beside the yard. According to his own account, he arrived in Salem on 6 July 1791 "and went to live in Mrs Simons House and Lived there 17 months Dureing which time i began to prepare the materials and Built my House on Stage Point in Salem—and got it ready for to Live in and moved into it the 28 Day of Sept 1793," four months after the frame had been raised. It stood until 1914 when it was consumed by the great Salem Fire. The necessary timbers for the house, barn, and blacksmith shop had been carted by land or had been freighted by water from North River.

From then until he was approached by the Committee to build the *Essex*, Enos Briggs' reputation continued to be enhanced by many successful hulls, including the Crowninshields' famous *Belisarius*, the brigantine *Friendship* for Nichols & Hodges of the Committee, and four others for Elias Hasket Derby. He was not only a masterful craftsman but had the flair and ability, unlike Beckett, to put on a good show whenever a launching date came to hand.

"Mr. Briggs," said the Reverend Bentley, "has uncommon success in his launches," but his brother had the better voice in the Reverend's East Church Singing School!

NOTES

William Gray, Jr. was Chairman of the Salem Frigate Committee. Its members consisted of the following Salem men:

John Norris, a merchant and distiller. His distillery was located at the foot of Liberty Street, not far from his wharf. See Fig. 2. He lived on Essex Street, a wealthy man who, among other institutions, became a benefactor of the Andover Theological Institution. He was born at Salem on 26 October 1751, married Mary Herbert, and died at Salem on 22 December 1808. He had no children.

Jacob Ashton, merchant, was for many years the President of the Salem Marine Insurance Company. He lived on Essex

Street and was the son of Jacob and Mary (Ropes). He graduated from Harvard College in 1766. He was born at Salem on 5 September 1744, married Susannah (Lee), and died at Salem on 28 December 1829.

Benjamin Hodges had been a master mariner and a shipmaster in the employ of Elias Hasket Derby. He lived on the corner of Essex and Orange Streets and was the son of John and Mary (Manning). He was born at Salem on 26 April 1754, married Hannah (King), and died at Salem on 13 April 1806. "He was remarkable for his noble personal appearance & for his many excellent qualities of head and heart."

Ichabod Nichols was born at Salem on 20 April 1749, the son of David and Hannah (Gaskell). In early life, he resided at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he later had a wholesale grocery business. He returned to Salem in 1793 and went into partnership with Benjamin Hodges. Nichols married Lydia (Ropes). He died on 2 July 1839. Nichols was the member of the Frigate Committee who handled the bulk of the logistical work before Joseph Waters was appointed Navy Agent. "Papa," his son George wrote to his brother at Harvard on 10 November 1798, "I believe does not write by this opportunity as his time has been employed upon the business of the Friggate to be built in this town" (Nichols Family Papers, Box I, Essex Institute).

Benjamin Pickman (1740–1819) had been a Loyalist during the Revolution, but regained favor afterwards and became Town Treasurer. He was Master of the Salem Marine Society from 1808 to the time of his death.

Benjamin Goodhue brought Timothy Pickering up to date on 26 October 1798 (Pickering Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, XXVI, 218). "I have the pleasure of informing you that the building a Vessel of War in this Town is in such train as leaves no room to doubt its being effected as speedily as possible, upwards of 70,000 dollars are already subscribed and more may be expected, which Will accomplish the building a Frigate of 32 Guns probably compleat except her warlike apparatus, which the Secr^{y} of the Navy wrote me would be supplied by Government in case the Subscription should be inadequate, I enclose you the doings of the Subscribers at their late meeting, and will thank you to give M^{r} Stoddert the information . . . I presume the Committee for building the Frigate will after they have made a little progress correspond with the Secr^{y} of the Navy on the Subject —they have sent to Newbury for M^{r} Hacket who built the *Alliance* and the Newbury Ship to come and be the planer and superintendant."

William Hackett was the second of four sons born to William Hackett (1712–1753) and Elizabeth (Stevens) (c. 1709–1753). A scrapbook of manuscripts at the Essex Institute, entitled "Salisbury, Massachusetts—Shipbuilding Miscellaneous Papers 1759–1804," includes numerous items by or about Hackett, including the information that he was at Lake George in 1759. The papers also contain shipbuilding notes and agreements from the pre-Revolutionary period, information that he was engaged to work upon Fort Merrimack, Salisbury, in 1775, and other documents including a letter from Ebenezer Stocker on 4 June 1798 asking Hackett to come to Newburyport to consult about the draught of the *Merrimack*. It also contains a rough copy of a petition, dated 16 March 1808, to the Great and General Court, alleging that his property was being taken from him without his consent. On 5 December 1806, he had been declared *non compos mentis* by the Probate Court. He died on 20 November 1808, "a distracted person." His tendency to periods of temporary insanity is mentioned as early as 1794 in a letter from the Secretary of War to Henry Jackson, Navy Agent in Boston, reproduced in *Naval Documents . . . Wars with the Barbary Powers*, op. cit., I, 76.

Surviving papers relating to Hackett's work on the merchantman *Massachusetts* are in the New York Public Library. The Peabody Museum has a letter from Hackett to his wife, dated from Germantown, Quincy, on the day after her launching: "There was a great number of People to Lanching I Donts Know but three tims as Many as at the Lanching of the *Aliance*."

Salem Shipbuilders

Ebenezer Mann was born at Pembroke, Massachusetts, on 6 August 1758, married Sally Buffington of Salem in 1791, and died at Salem on 19 March 1835. His shipyard was located just southeast of the spot where Goodhue Street now crosses the vestiges of the old North River. He gave up shipbuilding shortly after the turn of the century.

Christopher Turner was born at Pembroke in 1767 and died at Charlestown, Massachusetts, in 1812 while employed at the Navy Yard. One of his last jobs in Salem was to model the ship *George*, built in 1814, after his death, by an association of out-of-work ship carpenters. The *George* later was known variously as the "Salem-Calcutta Packet" and the "Salem School-Ship," and was a nursery for many Salem aspirants who became shipmasters by mid-century.

Retire Beckett was born at Salem in 1754, married Rebecca Swasey, and died in 1831. Until 1800, the Beckett ancestral shipyard was located to the east of the junction of modern Blaney and Derby Streets. Thereafter, it was shifted to the "upper lot" at the southern end of English Street, now within the bounds of the Massachusetts Electric Company's Salem Harbor Power Station. Letters between members of the Crowninshield family indicate that Beckett had been losing money for a number of years before he went bankrupt. "R. Becket has droped thro', & is now shut up," Jacob Crowninshield remarked on 15 January 1803. "'Tis lucky we got our new ship." By selling everything he owned, Beckett was enabled to pay off most of his debts. The Crowninshields, particularly, then hired him by the day to build ships for them, including the fourth *America* and the famous hermaphrodite brig yacht *Cleopatra's Barge* for George Crowninshield, Jr. Further characterizations of his eccentric tendencies, evidently of genetic origin, are given in Bentley's *Diary*, IV, 525. Beckett built the last of his twenty-five vessels in 1818. His family house, removed from its original location, is now the gift shop at the House of Seven Gables Settlement Association on Turner Street.

Enos Briggs was born at Pembroke on 26 July 1746 and married Sarah Thomas of Pembroke on 16 October 1777. During the Revolution he was First Lieutenant of Captain John Turner, Jr.'s Ninth Marshfield Company, Second Plymouth County Regiment. After his removal to Salem, he attracted many apprentice shipwrights, including Lincoln Stetson and Thatcher Magoun. His shipyard in Salem is located in Figs. 1 and 2 and illustrated in Fig. 3, a four-acre plot on Stage Point on the site now occupied by "Pequot House" and the southerly end of the Congress Street bridge. The Peabody Museum owns several artifacts associated with him, including his model for Elias Hasket Derby's ketch *Eliza* of 1794, perhaps the oldest builders' "lift" model in existence. Briggs died on 9 October 1819 "in the public favour."

CHAPTER 4

Preparations for Laying the Keel

ON 13 November 1798, Ichabod Nichols hired a horse and chaise from Richard Manning, Jr.'s stable and set off for Salisbury to collect William Hackett. How long Hackett remained in Salem this time is unknown, but it probably was not for long. Neither is it known how far his design had progressed in less than a week's time; about all that can be said is that it was advancing sufficiently for Enos Briggs to begin calculating his expenses and the amount of timber required to complete the job.

It is equally regrettable that virtually nothing is known about Hackett's technical methods in the design phase. He could have begun by carving out a lift, or bread-and-butter, model with spokeshave and gouges, a procedure then becoming increasingly popular with local shipwrights. He could have prepared a formal draught on paper or he could have roughed out preliminary sketches with notes and offsets, the whole based on the intuition acquired from years of experience. The contemporary draught of the *Essex*, now at The National Archives in Washington, D. C., was not prepared at this formative period of design. We can assume this because there exists a letter in The *Essex* Papers, written from Salem by Hackett at the end of May 1799 to his son Andrew in Salisbury, requesting he bring to Salem "the box of Sweeps," that is, his set of drawing curves, because "I am Cald on to fix Drafts to Go to Congress by the Secretary of the Navy." The implication is that no formal plan was available before that time although Stoddert, it may be recalled, had solicited them as early as October 1798. Scattered jottings of dimensions in Hackett's hand are to be found in The *Essex* Papers and have been reproduced in the accompanying Appendices, but they are fragmentary to say the least.

Of her design, the noted maritime historian-naval architect Howard I. Chapelle has had this to say:

> The *Essex* was unlike the other American frigates in model; the sections do not show the rather marked "knuckles" below the waterline to be seen in the other frigates . . . She was designed with detached forecastle and quarterdeck, which were connected by means of the usual gangways along the sides, not quite flush with these two decks. She was somewhat like the Revolutionary War frigates in

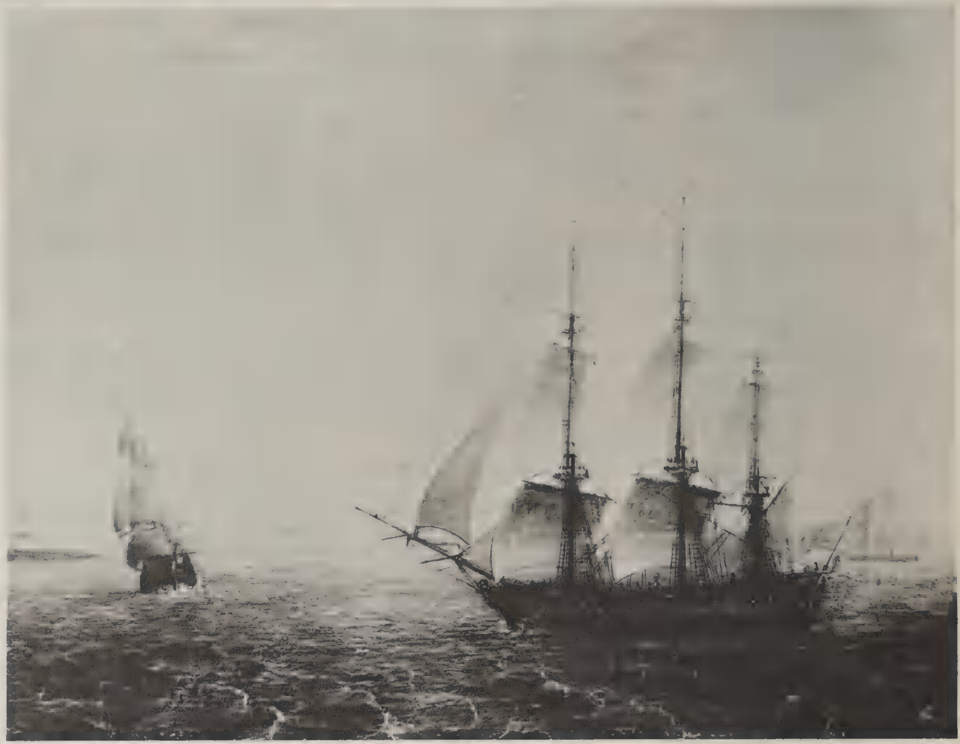


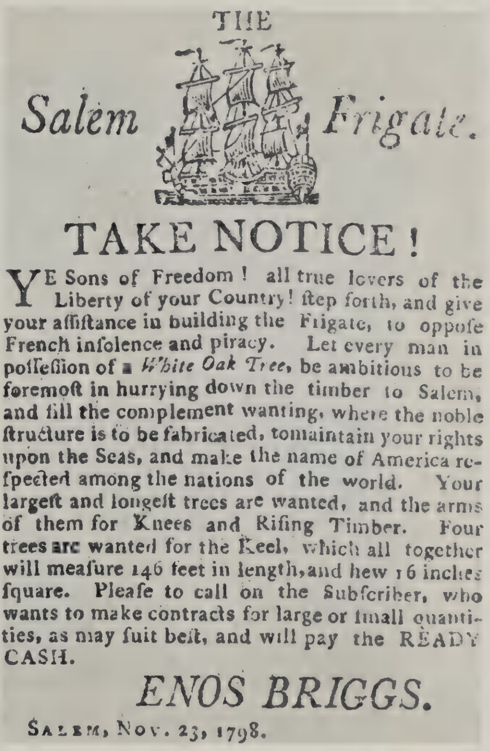
FIG. 15. Believed to represent the Continental frigate *Alliance*, designed and built by William Hackett of Salisbury in 1778, this oil was probably painted by a Dutch artist. The *Essex* may have shared similarities of design with the *Alliance*.

appearance, but had guns on her forecastle. She was designed with a solid bulwark on her quarterdeck, which seems to have gone out of fashion in the American frigates, but which again became the general practice early in the 1800's.

This somewhat "old fashioned" model must inevitably lead to speculation about the extent to which Hackett influenced himself by means of earlier designs for which he must be given credit, notably that of the Continental frigate *Alliance* of 1778. It is curious to find in The *Essex* Papers not only schedules of spar dimensions for several unidentified English frigates of comparable rate but also one in Hackett's hand clearly inscribed "Dimensions of Masts & yards for Ship *Alliance* bul^{t} at Salisbury," one which also includes the principal hull dimensions. The dimensions of the *Essex* and of the *Alliance* were by no means identical, yet varied by only seven feet on the length of keel for tonnage, six inches on the breadth of beam for tonnage, and three inches in the depth of hold, the *Alliance* being the greater in the first and third. Unfortunately, no contemporary draught of the *Alliance* is known, so any similarities or differences of design cannot be resolved; nevertheless, that the *Essex* may have been very much akin to, if not a rubber stamp of, an American-built frigate of the Revolutionary War must be kept constantly in mind as a distinct possibility.

Although Hackett was not to spend any considerable period of time in Salem before January 1799 and is not known to have been there at all during the last two weeks of November or throughout the entire month of December 1798, his absence at this stage was of little consequence. Enos Briggs had in hand sufficient information to proceed with the preliminary work. He had agreed with the Committee to construct a ship of 850 tons at $30 a ton, the price, as was customary, to include the timber for the hull which he was also to obtain.

Briggs inserted his first advertisement for timber in the *Salem Gazette* on 23 November 1798. It continued in each issue through that of 8 January 1799.



THE

Salem *Frigate.*

TAKE NOTICE!

YE Sons of Freedom! all true lovers of the Liberty of your Country! ſtep forth, and give your aſſiſtance in building the Frigate, to oppoſe French inſolence and piracy. Let every man in poſſeſſion of a *White Oak Tree*, be ambitious to be foremoſt in hurrying down the timber to Salem, and fill the complement wanting, where the noble ſtructure is to be fabricated, to maintain your rights upon the Seas, and make the name of America reſpected among the nations of the world. Your largeſt and longeſt trees are wanted, and the arms of them for Knees and Riſing Timber. Four trees are wanted for the Keel, which all together will meaſure 146 feet in length, and hew 16 inches ſquare. Pleaſe to call on the Subſcriber, who wants to make contracts for large or ſmall quantities, as may ſuit beſt, and will pay the READY CASH.

ENOS BRIGGS.

SALEM, NOV. 23, 1798.

FIG. 16. Enos Briggs' advertisement for timber which appeared for a number of weeks in the *Salem Gazette.*

The following day after the advertisement's initial appearance, Saturday, 24 November, snow began falling after sunset. By Sunday morning it had tapered off to light flurries, but that night a heavy snowfall began in earnest. By Monday morning, a full-fledged northeaster blizzard was dumping inch after inch of fine, driving snow upon the streets of the town. The storm continued unabated for three days, finally blowing itself out on Wednesday evening. Country dwellers were forced to build snow arches to extricate themselves from their homes, and, in the open fields, drifts had piled up as high as a man's head on horseback. So the weather continued during much of the winter, but it made for fine sledding to get felled trees out of the forests.

"The *Ready-Money* Contracts to be made for the Frigate," the *Gazette* reminded its readers, "will enliven this town, in the severity of winter. It is expected the ship will be ready to carry tribute to TALLEYRAND next autumn."

When ship timber should be cut and how long it ought to be kept in a timber yard or dock to season was always a matter for animated discussion among those concerned in shipbuilding; practices varied considerably from region to region and from one country to another. "Do you think there is any solid objection," Secretary of the Navy Stoddert was soon to query the Navy Agent at Boston, "to cutting the timber when the Sap is up? The British cut their's in that situation. I know that the winter season has been thought best in this Country—But in this Country, we know that our timber so cut, is of very short duration—not so, the British timber, cut when the pores are filled with Sap." That for the *Essex*, so far as we know, was entirely winter-cut, although lacking Briggs' personal account books it is impossible to say how much, if any, could have been supplied from reserves at his yard on Stage Point. A contemporary statement avows that "The whole timber for building

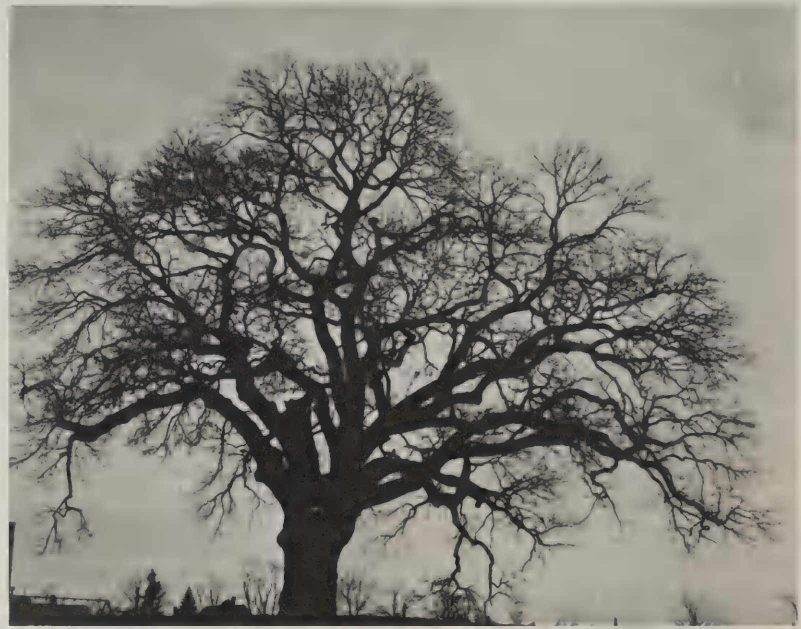


FIG. 17. A Danvers oak tree. Too small to be cut down when the *Essex* was built, it has now assumed the proportions of its predecessors which were.

the ship was procured in the neighbourhood of Salem and brought in on sleds and waggons," which for once agrees perfectly with local tradition. The timber, evidently, was of extraordinarily good quality. In 1807, when the *Essex* was undergoing extensive repairs at the Washington Navy Yard, Naval Constructor Josiah Fox was to submit a report that "The White Oak Timber and Plank with which this Ship was built is Superior in quality to any White Oak, I have seen made use of in the Navy—It appears to have been cut from Trees, young and Thriving." Much of the planking timber, it should be noted, came from the vicinity of the Merrimac River on the northern outskirts of Essex County.

A timber rendezvous, to which farmers of Danvers, Topsfield, Boxford, Andover, Wenham, and other Essex County rural towns could haul their largest trees, was set up on the corner of Summer and Essex Streets, opposite the old house in which Magistrate Jonathan Corwin was said to have held witch trials a century before. This site, far removed from any of the shipyards and more than a mile and three-quarters from the building ground ultimately selected, stood at the crossroads of most travel into Salem from the country towns. Edward Dorr, sometime employee of Retire Beckett, for whom he set ships' heads and made capstans and windlasses, and also the man reputed to have given Nathaniel Bowditch his first lessons with a Gunter's Rule, was retained to measure the timber as it was sledged in.

In the meantime, the Committee, with the advice of Briggs and Hackett, had reached a decision about the location of the construction site. A proper selection was crucial but not at all a difficult one to make. Save for the 560-ton ship *Grand Turk*, which had been launched with great tribulation from alongside Derby Wharf in 1791, the largest vessel built in Salem within recent memory had been but one-quarter of the tonnage proposed for the frigate. Only one spot within the bounds of the town nominally afforded "ideal" conditions.

Ebenezer Mann's yard, tucked away beside a gristmill on a bend of the not so deep and not particularly wide North River, was hopeless, not only because of the impossibility of an uneventful launch but because in getting to sea she could not pass through the too-narrow draw of the North Bridge. Even then, had that been possible, she would have to proceed "North About" around Salem only to be confronted by the inadequate draw of the Essex Bridge connecting Salem with Beverly. Again, had she been able to pass that obstacle, she would have had to navigate the precarious channel out of

Beverly Harbor, and, finally, pass to the southeastward around the northern tip of Salem Neck before gaining a clear passage into Salem Harbor. Mann's facility, furthermore, was so far removed from the commercial activity of the main waterfront that the carting or freighting of supplies from one place to another would have caused innumerable frustrations, delays, and unnecessary expense.

The obstacles presented at the already established shipyard facilities within the principal harbor were equally formidable. A vessel launching from Retire Beckett's yard at the foot of Beckett's lane, for example, had to traverse 500 to 1000 yards of shoal water before reaching maximum soundings. Momentum could not carry her so far; if she missed the height of a spring tide a vessel the size of the frigate could not be launched under any circumstances before the next; if by accident she hung up in the shallows and could not be towed off instantly, the labor involved to refloat her would be beyond imagination. As to the present circumstances, Beckett had contracted to build three vessels, with the result that sufficient additional ground space was unavailable.

Nowhere around Enos Briggs' yard on Stage Point was the situation any better. Bowditch's chart of 1806 indicates inadequate water for a vessel of deep draught throughout the entire region. Certainly, if the Crowninshields could not get their 700-odd-ton ship *America* up to their wharf in the South River, there was no hope that an 850-ton frigate could be got out. Less than 150 yards beyond Briggs' ground ways, on the opposite side of the river, was the massive, saw-toothed outline of Union (Long) Wharf built atop the alluvial hump of Jeggle's Island; beyond that was the blunt little finger of Forrester's Wharf and further still to the east the barrier of Derby Wharf constructed along the western edge of a sandbank caused by the currents interacting between the harbor and the South River channel. The sandbank, like a tongue thrust out toward the south and bare at low water, extended out more than twice the length of Derby Wharf as it had been built in 1798.

Elsewhere along the inner harbor the depth of water was less, if anything, while across it to the east lay the backside of Marblehead with nothing more attractive to offer. Only at the very entrance was there sufficient depth nearby to assure not only an unimpeded launch but a suitable anchorage close to the yard during the subsequent weeks of fitting out. Thus, Winter Island, at the northern extremity of the harbor, was selected because it was the only possible site.

An island in name only, it was in fact a peninsula attached to Salem Neck by a low causeway. Its name derived from an adjacent cove in which small shallops of the seventeenth century had taken refuge from winter northeasters, known once as Winter Harbor. The "island" had figured prominently in the early history of the settlement and at one time had been used for shipbuilding purposes, but the trade had long since died out there. The *Essex* was the only vessel of size or of importance ever built upon Winter Island. To build one there now required the establishment of an entirely new yard with attendant facilities as well as improvements to its land approaches. In recent history, Winter Island had been occupied by old Fort William, renamed Fort Pickering in November 1799, a handful of farmhouses, a small wharf and warehouse leased from the town by Elias Hasket Derby, and, just above it on a steep hill, the site of the town gibbet. The principal inhabitants, excluding the few scruffy soldiers at the fort, were the cows that grazed upon its common lands.

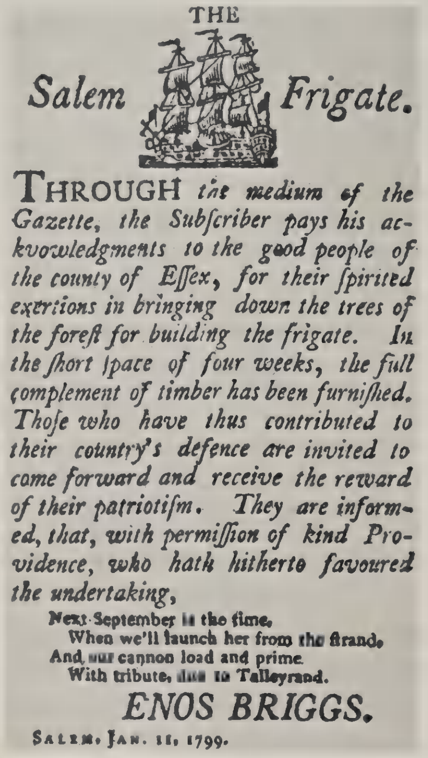
Early in November 1798, workmen began blasting the rocks out of the road on Salem Neck. On Winter Island itself a new road was begun from the fort to the causeway. At the same time, repairs were beginning within Fort William, long neglected and improperly garrisoned.

On 6 December, Enos Briggs launched from his South Fields yard, "with that graceful regularity which distinguishes the builder upon that favourable spot he possesses," a brig for the Thorndikes of Beverly. She was the fourth vessel he had built that year and the last of his private contracts for some time. He was now in a position to give his full attention to the Salem Frigate.

"Timber continually passing *for the ship* to be built for the U.S. on the neck, & some of the work preparing," the Reverend William Bentley noted on 22 December. More snow had fallen; in the country it was on a level with the tops of the fences. Temperatures hovered near zero Fahrenheit as they are wont to do in this part of the world at Christmastide, and by the end of the first week of January 1799 Salem Harbor had frozen all the way down to Winter Island. "*The timber for the frigate* comes in merrily," repeated Bentley just after New Year's. "The timber for the Ship has come in so freely, & it has been fresh unusually good sledding that a general supply is obtained."

Briggs' advertisement, which had wandered around on various pages of the *Salem Gazette* twice a week since Thanksgiving, finally disappeared. In its place, with the issue of 11 January, subscribers read an appreciation of the liberal response to "hurrying down the timber to Salem."

An eyewitness who chanced to be present in the *Gazette* office when Briggs walked in with the text of his thanks, described the scene years later. On hand were the remembrancer, now known only as "Oliver Oldschool," Briggs, Editor Thomas C. Cushing, and poet and Salem Academy preceptor William Biglow. Cushing, showing Biglow the copy to be set and tapping him familiarly on the shoulder, said, "Sawney, let us have four lines as a caption!" Biglow thought a moment and concocted the verse reproduced here. "That's a good joke!" mused Briggs. "You have set the time for her launching, whereas I, the builder, had not dared to do it. But I will be careful to see that you are not a false prophet!"



THE

Salem Frigate.

THROUGH *the medium of the Gazette, the Subſcriber pays his ackvowledgments to the good people of the county of Eſſex, for their ſpirited exertions in bringing down the trees of the foreſt for building the frigate. In the ſhort ſpace of four weeks, the full complement of timber has been furniſhed. Thoſe who have thus contributed to their country's defence are invited to come forward and receive the reward of their patriotiſm. They are informed, that, with permiſſion of kind Providence, who hath hitherto favoured the undertaking,*

Next September is the time,
When we'll launch her from the ſtrand,
And our cannon load and prime
With tribute, due to Talleyrand.

ENOS BRIGGS.

SALEM, JAN. 11, 1799.

FIG. 18. Enos Briggs' acknowledgment to local suppliers of timber for the *Essex*, as it was published in the *Salem Gazette*.

William Hackett returned to Salem at the beginning of the second week in January. Innkeeper Benjamin Webb's bills indicate he again lodged at his tavern at five dollars a week for twenty-two days in January and a further twelve days in February. On 11 January, the Committee paid him $100 on account, of a sum which by the end of the year would total $1,300 plus $51.54 travel expenses, for "Drafting, constructing and superintending the Frigate *Essex* built at Salem."

It may have been about this time that Briggs and his yard gang actually got down to work—certainly Hackett's prolonged presence suggests something more than simple consultation with the builder. One suspects he was in town to examine the quality of the timber, to superintend preparations at the building site, and to oversee the preliminary phases of lofting the ship's lines.

Where the bulk of the lofting took place is anybody's guess, although it must have been accomplished in an existing space; if not in one habitually used for such work then in a sailmaker's loft hired for the purpose. Here, the loftsmen carefully enlarged the original design to full scale, bending long wooden battens to the forms specified by the offsets, scribing the resulting curves upon the floor or chalking them on, a meticulous and specialized job incomprehensible to the layman, but for the professional the means by which the shape and fairness of each individual timber of the ship could be determined and finally translated into the finished product.

Lofting permitted the construction of the full-size molds, made from thin boards nailed together for length as necessary, braced, and cut to the specific curves and dimensions scribed on the mold loft floor. These, carefully marked, identified, and accompanied by bevel boards to show the angle of cut at any given station, were then taken out to the timber yard, compared critically with the stock in hand, and finally served as the individual patterns for the configuration of the timbers they represented. Briggs and his men spent 25½ days and used up 1,000 feet of boards to complete the essential molds for the *Essex*. They were turned over to Hackett for approval.

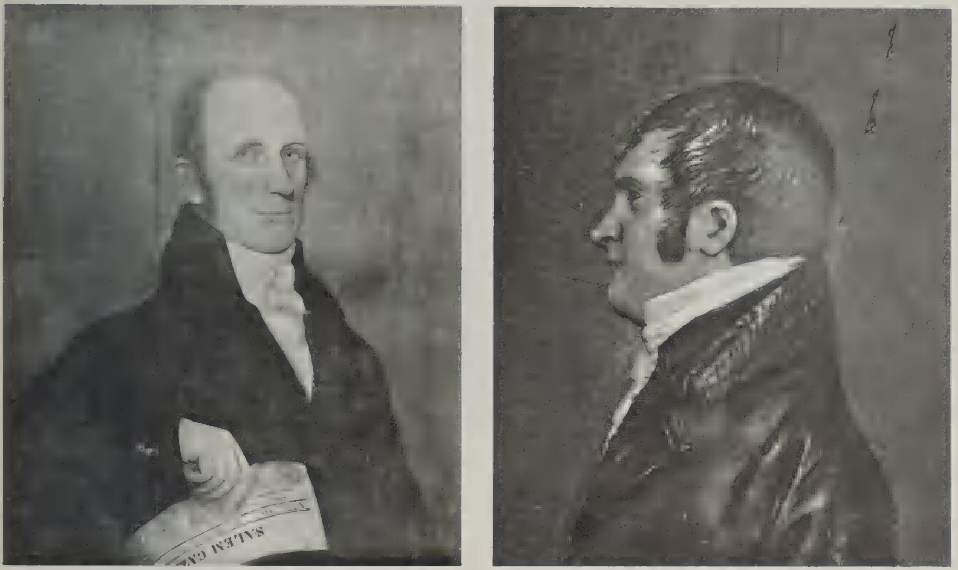


FIG. 19. (*Left*) Thomas Croade Cushing (1764–1824), Editor of the *Salem Gazette*, from an oil by Joseph Badger, and (*right*) William Biglow (1773–1844), author of the rhyme in Briggs' timber acknowledgment, from a wax portrait by John Christian Rauschner.

The administrative details of the Frigate Committee, handled until now by Ichabod Nichols, were becoming so complex as to require full-time attendance upon them. Nichols hadn't sufficient time; what was becoming increasingly necessary was the appointment of a proper Navy Agent to oversee

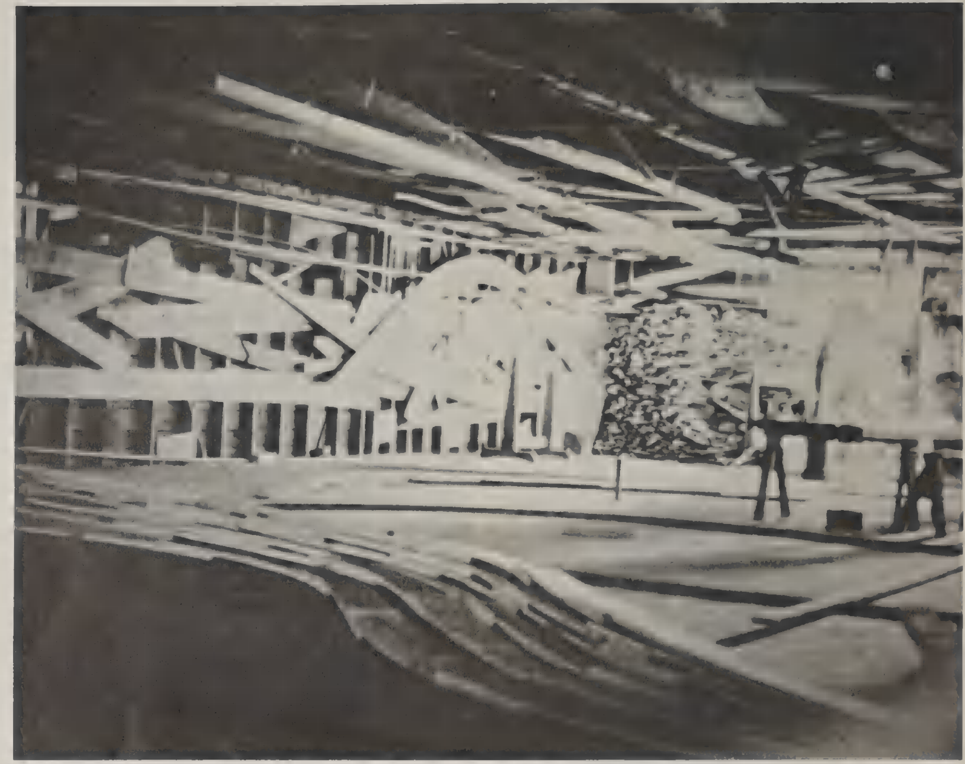


FIG. 20. The mold loft of a Nova Scotia shipyard which, in 1965, when this photograph was taken, still specialized in the building of wooden vessels.

the expenditure of money, negotiate contracts, handle the correspondence, and keep a sharp eye perpetually peeled upon all aspects of logistics. Negotiations had already begun with numerous, widely scattered tradesmen for the acquisition of masts and spars, sailcloth, and copper fastenings. The name submitted to the Secretary of the Navy as the Committee's choice for the Navy Agent was that of Captain Joseph Waters, forty-one years old and a former shipmaster who within recent years had given up an active life at sea to pursue more rewarding mercantile ventures ashore. With the exception of a momentary stain upon his reputation, occasioned earlier in the decade by his brief trafficking in the African slave trade, he was nevertheless acknowledged as a man of integrity and diligence. A widower, his wife of sixteen years, Mary Dean, had only just died at the beginning of the previous November, leaving him with a family of seven children.

By mid-February 1799, Waters began to take over from Nichols as Agent for the Committee and had agreed to serve officially as Navy Agent should the Secretary be pleased to confirm him. Stoddert did so on 23 February.

> Sir It being necessary that a person of Character and Judgement should be appointed to act as the Agent of the Public in superintending the equipment of the Ship building at Salem by the patriotic Subscriptions of your Citizens, and as you have been particularly mentioned to me for that purpose by the Committee, you will be pleased in future to act in that Capacity, and I shall address you from time to time on the Subject of that vessel, and shall expect to hear from you as to her progress—

Each month, from the laying of the keel until the *Essex* departed from Salem eight months later, involved Waters in an increasing tempo of logistics. Many problems were conceived months before they became full-blown issues of immediate concern, while others demanded continuous attention from the very beginning of his administration. He was, at the same time, the servant of two masters of the purse strings—Benjamin Pickman who had charge of the subscription fund and William Winder, the Accountant of the Navy, who doled out the government money as necessary.

In accepting the job of Navy Agent, Waters could expect to receive a commission of two percent upon certain expenditures paid for by the Navy and all those entered upon the books of the Frigate Committee; that is, the materials, labor, and rentals properly paid for out of the $74,700 subscription fund, known ponderously in the accounting statements as "Hire of Tradesmen, Labourers, &c." and "Materials Wrought & Unwrought for Building & Equipment."

Theoretically, the subscription money was supposed to provide only the basic vessel and her most essential equipment. Except in the unlikely event that there remained a surplus from the subscription account, all else—ordnance, military stores, kentledge, copper sheathing, ship's stores, provisions, hospital stores, slop clothing, recruiting expenses, and "spare parts" such as extra sails, spars, anchors, cables, and hardware—necessary to the outfitting of a complete ship of war ready for service, were expenses to be borne by the Department of the Navy under its budget from the Congressional authorizations. Had it been otherwise, the *Essex*, as well as the other subscription ships built elsewhere, could not have been constructed. Thus, when she sailed from Salem Harbor fully outfitted, manned, and with twelve months' stores and provisions on board, she had actually cost more than double the amount of the subscription. This was as it should have been, for it was the amount of the subscription rather than the total cost of the vessel that constituted the "patriotic loan to Government."

"Hire of Tradesmen, Labourers &c." comprehended the nondescript workmen engaged to do odd jobs such as cooking for the shipwrights and joiners, nighttime guard duties, or carting equipment from one place to another as, for example, hauling anchors from the Salem Iron Manufactory in Danvers to the storehouse on Union Wharf or carting gunpowder from the wharf to the powder house. The heading also included the hire of boats and vessels or chaises and stagecoaches and the rental of houses, wharves, warehouses, counting rooms, or whatever other structures were required for the smooth prosecution of the business. Since it did not include the wages of men actually involved in building the ship, the amount under this head payable from the subscription money came to only $2,735.36.

"Materials Wrought & Unwrought for Building & Equipment" was a different story, accounting for $71,258.36 from the subscription fund, exclusive of extras paid by the Navy. This classification encompassed the materials expended in building, equipping, and rigging the ship and also the bills of the various professionals and tradesmen: William Hackett as Superintendent, Enos Briggs as Constructor and Master Builder, Paul Revere for copper castings and fastenings, Samuel McIntire for the decorative carvings, the Salem Duck Manufactory for sailcloth and Buffum & Howard for sails, cordage from the three Salem ropewalks, painting and plumbing by William Luscomb, ironwork by Enos' brother Alden Briggs, and the manifold "sundries" such as anchors, spars, boats, blocks, pumps, and the Revere-made lightning "rod."

The basic cost of the *Essex*, therefore, before embellishments added by the Navy but complete with one suit of sails, copper fastened, and the cost of fitting the copper sheathing but excluding the amount of the sheathing itself, came to $73,993.72. It is a tribute to Joseph Waters' skillfull management that it came well within the limits set by the subscription total, although, after adding on his commission, there showed a deficit of just under $775.

The accounts with the Navy, in true bureaucratic form, required meticulous attention to detail. A Circular Letter to Navy Agents, reproduced in the Appendices, had originally been circulated in October 1798 but was sent to Waters shortly after his official appointment. It spelled out the content and form of the weekly summary statements of expenditure debited to the Navy to be transmitted to the Secretary of the Navy. The individual heads, in addition to the two mentioned in connection with the subscription fund, were Ship's Stores, Provisions, Ordnance & Military Stores, Hospital Stores, Slop Clothing, Clothing for Marines, and Pay of the Navy. Waters' final accounts show that these, but also including kentledge, sheathing copper, extra sails, a second set of spars, spare anchors, reserve duck and cables, labor, and his commission, caused the Navy Department to expend another $79,214.18, thereby bringing the total cost of the *Essex* with twelve months' stores and provisions on board to $154,687.77.

Funds to meet the demands of the creditors came from two sources: drafts from the Accountant of the Navy drawn on the United States Branch Bank in Boston, then transferred to Waters' special account at the Essex Bank in Salem and, secondly, from the Frigate Committee Treasurer. The former were payable on demand to Waters; the latter were due from subscribers in eight installments, the dates of which were set by the Committee. Each installment was payable within ten days, and each was promptly announced in the *Salem Gazette*. As an example, a $5,000 subscriber such as John Norris was required to pay in ten percent of his pledge within ten days of 16 November 1798, 24 December 1798, 29 January 1799, 4 March 1799, and 9 March 1799; twenty percent as of 25 May 1799; and fifteen percent as of 14 August and 12 September 1799. Some citizens elected to pay several at once; others found themselves in arrears, but at each payment they received a receipt from Pickman. They were to be retained for return at a later date as authorization for the issuance of six percent Government stock. Most of these receipts still exist in The *Essex* Papers.

As Waters began to pick up the logistical threads handed over by the Committee, Enos Briggs was beginning to work upon the massive timbers for the keel. Hackett, who by this time had gone home to Salisbury, was summoned back again by Billy Gray on the eleventh of March. "The committe for building the Frigate, in this Town have desired me to request that you will come down as early this week as you can, as Mr. Briggs has got to work upon the neck & has got the keel of the ship out, we shall want you to approve the scarf &c. . . ."

Hackett's establishment in Salem, where he was to remain almost continuously until the end of the following November, began on Tuesday, 2 April, when, as the Reverend Bentley noted, "The Ship Yard begins to be alive with Carpenters." The sloping ground down to the cove just west of Fort William was still snow-covered; in some of the back streets of Salem and on Salem Neck snow lay in places three feet deep. Gangs of laborers, with shovels flying, began work the following Saturday morning "to prepare the ground for the Keel of the Frigate." On Monday the eighth, Briggs' gang started laying the groundways. Carpenters were at work on peripheral yard sheds. The old fort house and barracks at Fort William were cleared out to receive the ship carpenters, while Nathan Peirce, who had contracted with the Committee in mid-February to build a blacksmith's shop at the yard, but had been prevented from doing so because of the severity of the winter, now had his men fully employed upon it.

The shop, which would become the domain of Alden Briggs, was specified to be a building thirty-six feet wide by fifty-two feet long with a nine-foot stud, a pitched roof covered with "good Merch^{l} Laying Shingles the boards upon the sides & ends to be feather edged, to be four Doors in the four sides of the shop, Eight windows around the shop to be made with rough boards & batten'd a partition to run through the shop with two Doors in the same with a lock on each, & all the Doors & windows to be hung with good substantial hinges of Iron, the windows to be Eight or ten feet long and hung so as to lift up, and to be furnished with hooks & Staples to fasten the same within the Shop the whole to be compleated in a workmanlike manner for the sum of three hundred Dollors," and the whole to be complete on or before 15 April. No floor or covering was to be installed.

Whether changed at the last minute or added to during the course of the summer, the shop ultimately was widened by an additional twelve feet and included a small storeroom and shed to accommodate the joiners and their tools. It is doubtful if the original agreement was adhered to in other respects either, for Frederick Putnam was paid for making and hanging a door, putting in two windows and casings, making and hanging two shutters, cutting in joists and laying "the lower Floor" and "the Floor overhead," putting up an entry partition, and, of especial interest, "Making the Table to drought off the Ship." But, inasmuch as the table cost about the same as one of the shutters, it could not have been large and must be assumed to have been a small scrive board for Alden Briggs' use in matching his ironwork to specific configurations of the ship. Thaddeus Stimpson attended to the underpinnings, built and collared the smithy chimney, and finished whitewashing the barracks at the fort.

On Saturday, 13 April, the keel of the frigate was laid. No one seems to have left a record of the celebrations that almost certainly took place. Elisha

Briggs, who had come to Salem to assist brothers Enos and Alden and who had been sent off posthaste to brother Daniel's shipyard at Milton after floor timbers when a deficiency of that article was discovered in Salem, returned with them. Within ten days of the laying of the keel, most floor timbers were already in place upon it, while within the same period the Salem Frigate had been given the name *Essex* by the Committee, in honor of the county for which Salem was the shire town.

NOTES

A contemporary draught of the *Essex* (Fig. 33), undoubtedly by Hackett inasmuch as his handwriting appears on it, is now housed in The National Archives, Washington, D. C., reference number 41–9–1L. It suggests hasty preparation or, more probably, simply demonstrates Hackett's unpolished draughting technique. It should not be considered his original working drawing, nor does it necessarily represent the *Essex* "as built." The evidence points to the fact that it was executed some time after the principal dimensions had been established but before she had been finished.

The quotation from Howard I. Chapelle's *History of the American Sailing Navy* (New York, 1949) respecting the design of the *Essex* is reproduced by permission of the publishers, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

The Continental frigate *Alliance* was reputedly "a favorite with the whole navy by reason of her speed and beauty." Traditionally, she once logged fifteen knots with the wind abeam, and she was claimed to have been modeled underwater after a fast French lugger. A comparison of her principal dimensions, from the document included with The *Essex* Papers, with those of the *Essex* are as follows:

	Alliance	*Essex*
Length of Keel for tonnage	125.0 ft.	118.0 ft.
Breadth of Beam for tonnage	36.6	37.0
Depth of hold	12.6	12.3
Depth between decks	6.0	5.9
Depth of the waist	5.6	6.0
Deadrising	1.11*	2.3

* at 2/5 floor

From the same document, the *Alliance*'s spars measured as follows:

Main Mast	84	head 12
Fore D^{o}	77	— 11
Miz^{n} Mast	72	— 9½
Main Top mast	56	— 7
Fore Top mast	53	— 6½
Mizen Top mast	38	— 5
Bowsprit	56	
Jibb Boom	40	
Main TopGa^{l} ma^{t}	30	feet hoist, head 15, yar^{d} 40
Fore D^{o}	28	[hoist,] [head] 14 yard 37
Mizen D^{o}	24	[hoist,] [head] 10 yard 30
Main Top	19	
Fore D^{o}	18	
Mizn D^{o}	13	
Main Topsail y^{d}	56	
[Fore "] yard	52	
[Mizzen "] yard	40	
Spritsail yard	52	
Sprit^{l} Topsail yard	40	

main yard 75 after wards made 84

Fore yard 71	
Cross Jack y^d 52	
Main Studing Sail Booms	42 feet
Fore D^o	38
Main Topmast D^o	29
Fore D^o	27
Main Royal yard	30
Fore D^o	27
Mizen D^o	20

A few bills for lumber appear in The *Essex* Papers; all relate to peripheral construction such as sheds in the shipyard and incidental structures. None remain for timber or planking for the ship due to the fact that such records, as yet unaccounted for, were kept by Enos Briggs. A letter written from Salem on 24 January 1799 to Benjamin Goodhue in Philadelphia, however, confirms the speed with which the timber supply was obtained. ". . . the ground hath been covered with Snow ever Since you left home & fine traveling from all parts of the country which enabled the Committee for building the frigate to Collect the timber in about four weeks but it prevented so large a quantity of wood from coming to markett. . . ." (Benjamin Goodhue Ledger 1760–1809 and Letters 1790–1799, at the Essex Institute.)

The "Oliver Oldschool" anecdotes in this chapter and in Chapter 10 are recited in Captain George Henry Preble, U.S.N., "The First Cruise of the United States Frigate *Essex*," Essex Institute *Historical Collections*, X (1870), part 3. They are supposed to have originated from a communication published in an unspecified issue of the *New York Gazette* of 1837.

Explanations of lofting techniques may be found in such sources as David Steel, *The Elements and Practice of Naval Architecture* (London, 1822); John Fincham, *Directions for Laying Off Ships on The Mould-Loft Floor* (London, 1859); and L. M'Kay, *The Practical Ship-Builder* (New York, 1839).

Although Benjamin Webb's bills indicate that William Hackett lodged at his tavern on Essex Street for twenty days in April, during part of that month and during the remainder of his stay in Salem he lodged and boarded with Jonathan Brown, who also arranged to have his laundry done, for a total of $136.57 over the seven month period.

Joseph Waters was born at Salem on 19 February 1756, the son of Benjamin, who had come from Charlestown, Massachusetts, and Esther (Gilbert) of Ipswich. He married Mary Dean on 2 July 1782; she died of convulsions on 1 November 1798, aet. 39, leaving behind seven children, the last two of whom were their only sons. During the War of 1812, Waters commanded a volunteer company of Sea Fencibles. He died at Salem on 7 February 1833. The hint that he had been involved briefly in the slave trade comes from Bentley's *Diary* for 2 August 1792.

Waters, as Navy Agent, was in communication with the Navy Department for a number of years after the *Essex* was built to settle the accounts, finally accomplished on 20 June 1808. A letter of 30 January 1800 to Thomas Turner, Accountant of the Navy, explained where the accounts stood a month after the ship had left Salem Harbor. "The *Essex* being built by Subscribers to a loan in this Town, & a Committee from the Subscribers, having agreed with M^r Briggs at a stipulated price per Ton, & he to find all the Timber & Plank for said Ship, of course no Timber & Plank on hand to go to the Credit of the United States & the Materials of Rigging & Equipment, not being brought to the Store, have not enter'd them in any Store account but charged the Bills as I have collected them

& paid the Money as you'll see by the Committees' accounts, which I shall transmit you in a few days—The materials I have Received from the Government, or by their order, & those purchased by me, have been enter'd, & you have a Store account of them transmitted under the 31st December last—The Ships accounts are handed forward, different from what they wou'd have been, had the Ship been wholly built & equipped by Governm^{t}."

Another letter from Waters to Turner on 11 March 1800 exposes the troubles Waters had experienced while attempting to collect his commission as Navy Agent. "Soon after I commenced on the business, in a Letter from the Secretary of the Navy of March 16. 99, he inform'd me that the Commission allowed the Navy Agents is 2 per Cent, if that be the case where is he to get it—for suppose Government had a Ship building in Boston, & they appoint an Agent there, & the Government thinks they can make a saving to purchase all the articles in New York—& ship them to the Navy Agent at Boston, to be applied to the Ship building there, in that case where woud the Agent find his 2 per Cent—I think the Government can't expect that the Agent shall do the business without a compensation. You say that if the amount is for articles Received from other Naval Agents & Naval Store-keeper, & expended & applied to the *Essex* Frigate, the charge is improper. I am far from thinking with you, that it is, it not being customary to allow it, dont in my opinion make it so—I can easily perceive that the Government may be made accountable for double Commissions, & then make a saving in many cases—You have a Statement which takes up the 25.935.100 Dollars—9791-54/100 Dollars of this sum has been received from the Committee of Boston & Mess^{rs} Stephen Higginson & C^{o}—& has been applied to the *Essex* Frigate, & I presume there has not been any charge of Commission by these to the Government, shou'd that be the case presume that on that part, I shall be entitled to my Com^{n} the rem^{r} requiring my attention, as much in receiving & delivering the articles, as though I had bought them. But if the Government has adopted it as a rule not to allow the Navy Agent any compensation for supplies he may receive from another Agent where Commission has been charged by him—I wou'd wish to stand on the same footing with others."

It will be noted throughout this book that there appears to be a great discrepancy in accuracy of spelling from one Waters letter to another; the answer is that those, such as the above, where spelling is reasonably consistent, were letter-book copies entered not by Waters himself but by his clerk.

Alden Briggs (1763–1849) was a farmer, shipbuilder, and blacksmith. Elisha Briggs (1750–1836) had taken over the family Brick Kiln yard with Alden, but about 1807 removed to Newburyport where he built a number of vessels at the foot of Ashland Street adjoining the Abel Merrill yard, a site later used by Donald McKay when he was in partnership with William C. Currier. Both Alden and Elisha came to Salem to help brother Enos with the *Essex*. Brother Daniel Briggs (1754–1825) was then building ships at Milton, Massachusetts.

CHAPTER 5

Early Contractual Agreements

EVEN as the ship's lines were being lofted and the timber was being got out, negotiations already had been under way for some weeks to secure certain "Materials Wrought & Unwrought," particularly the copper fastenings, the masts, and spars. As was to be the case with many of the goods and services which went into the building of the *Essex*, the Committee and Joseph Waters frequently entered into agreements with men recommended by the Navy Agents elsewhere, notably those at Boston and Portsmouth. These tradesmen had performed similar work for frigates in states of far greater forwardness than the *Essex*, while their prices and overall performances had become an established matter of record in consequence. So, the Richardsons of Boston came to be employed to do the head-setting and the building of the quarter galleries. McClennan & Sanders were imported from Boston to do the rigging. Luke M. Laighton of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, would undertake the manufacture of the principal spars. The story was much the same later on when the time came to assemble the sea stores and the provisions necessary to outfit her for sea.

Because no Navy Agent had yet been appointed during the formative stages of planning, many of the early contractual agreements are not to be found in The *Essex* Papers. Only from late February when Waters involved himself in the business do the majority of such documents survive. As a result, we are left without copies of the formal contracts with Hackett or with Briggs or with the joiners to specify the scope of their responsibilities, but in The *Essex* Papers we do have a copy of a memorandum, presumably used as a model by the Salem Frigate Committee, for the joinery work to be performed on the twenty-eight-gun frigate *Boston*, then being built by subscription in that town. This, as a contemporary document containing the specifications deemed sufficiently important to be committed to writing, is reproduced below although it should not be assumed to be a carbon copy of any comparable agreement which may have been concluded with the joiners of the *Essex*.

[Agreement with the Joiners for the Frigate *Boston*]

Memorandum of an agreement made this third day of January AD One thousand seven hundred & ninety nine between Gorham Parsons & Thomas H. Per-

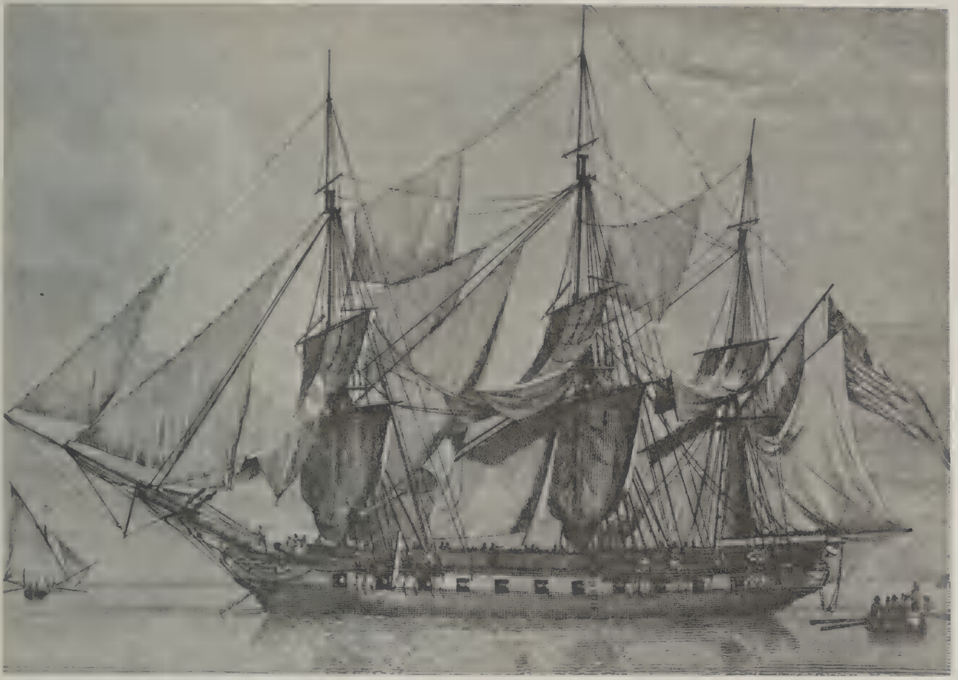


FIG. 21. The United States frigate *Boston*, built by a subscription of the Boston merchants in 1798–99.

kins (Agents for the Committee appointed to superintend the Frigate now on the Stocks in M^r^ Harts Ship yard) on the one part, and Nath^l^ Brown & Joab Hunt of said Boston Ship Joiners on the other part. Witnesseth, that for and in consideration of the Sum of twelve hundred dollars to be paid to the said Brown & Hunt (and which is to be paid them as the work progresses at the disposition of the said Parsons & Perkins) they do agree in the manner following Viz^t^:—That they will commence without delay to prepare the lumber for completing the Joiners work of the aforesaid Frigate [*Boston*], and that as soon as the Ship Carpenters is ready they will begin to joiner the standing work of the Said Frigate, and it is understood that they are to compleat the Joiners work on board the said Ship in every part in a workmanlike manner and as the Frigates of the United States are usually finished, subject to the directions & wishes of the Said Parsons & Perkins or the persons they shall appoint to superintend the business—And whereas they have annex'd a Memorandum to this agreement, specifying the particulars of the work as far as is in their power, and which may not include all the Joiners work of the said Ship, but that every thing belonging to that branch of business is to be compleated by the Said Brown & Hunt tho' the same m[a]y not be particularized in the said Memorandum, and the said Brown & Hunt do agree & warrant to the said Agents that due diligence shall be used in the completion of the work & that the Ship shall not be detained a day in consequence of any delay on their part, And the said Parsons & Perkins do agree to furnish all the materials necessary to the completion of the above mentioned Joiners work, to be delivered by them at the Ship yard or such other place as the said Brown & Hunt may think proper to have them—And to the faithfull performance of the above contract we do oblige & bind ourselves under the penal Sum of one thousand dollars, to be paid by the delinquent party & in case of dispute or misunderstanding in the premisses, we do mutually agree to refer the same to persons to be chosen by us, whose decision shall be binding upon us.

THP
GP
JH
NB

Schedule of the work to be done on board the *Boston* Frigate now building in M^{r} Harts ship yard, by Mess^{rs} Brown & Hunt agreeably to the Contract subjoined, and which is not supposed to Contain all the joiners work of the said Ship, which is to be compleated by them, but such parts as are at present recollected

Out board work

To beading wails, Black streak, & thick streak, plaining from Wails to Gunwale, working plank shear & rails to answer Chain wails and Head Rails & Timbers to be worked Stern to be pannelld grooved to be lined with thin boards, with mouldings around the windows—Gallereys to be finished compleat.

Hall up [Orlop] Deck

Magazine, filling & Light house abaft on Lower deck Bread Room, Stewarts Room, slopp Room, Cap^{t} & Lieutenants Store rooms, Cock pitt, & a store room for the officer of Marines Plaining all the Beams & Carlines above the Hall up Deck, also the water ways & Store rooms. Plaining the Sides within, boarding the clamps & building as many burths for the officers, as the Cap^{t} of the Ship may think nesecssary—Plainings the Beams & Carlines & knees of upper Deck & working them with Oval or Plaining underside of upper deck Beading the thick streak above water ways & Clamps under the Beams & working Shott lockers & ports—the Cabbin to be sealed between the Carlines with Og's to the stern finishing—The Cabbin bulk head to be panneld & to Swing in three parts—To work the Capsterns—the netting rails to be worked on both sides, the stern rail, plank shears, water ways, rising, breast rails, grub Beam, belaying bitts, Breast stantions, Bowsprit bitts, fife rail, Top Sail sheet bitts, plank for quater stantions all to be worked—Decks to be plained. Making as many tables & Cartridge Boxes as may be nesecssary for the Ship and finally to Compleat Such other work as may be thought nesecssary by Mess^{rs} Perkins & Parsons & all in a workman like manner.

One of the first matters of concern to the Salem Frigate Committee, even before Waters appeared on the scene, was the procurement of the copper fastenings. The *Essex* was always intended to have been copper fastened and sheathed, as had been made plain in the Secretary of the Navy's letter to Benjamin Goodhue in October 1798. Copper sheathing, in itself, precluded any possible use of iron fastenings due to the electrolytic action between the two metals, for as Stoddert had written specifically to Navy Agents elsewhere: "It is of importance that the Bolts to be used shoud be of Copper, for it is found that a vessel bolted with Iron & then coppered will not last more than three years, as the copper corrodes, and soon destroys the iron."

The name of one man—Colonel Paul Revere—came immediately to mind as the best possible source of the requisite fastenings. Copper sheathing, on the other hand, would have to be furnished by the Navy; in 1799 Revere had not yet developed the capability of manufacturing rolled sheet copper.

Well-remembered in American history as a master silversmith, engraver, and patriot of Revolutionary War fame, Revere was described in the Boston *Directory* as a "bell and cannon founder" whose foundry was located on Lynn Street in the North End, and in association with his son, Joseph Warren Revere, as a silversmith in Ann Street. He was, and had been, something of a jack-of-all-trades from designer of a wartime gunpowder mill to metalurgist and founder of no mean ability. By accident, he had recently stumbled upon the secret of working pure malleable copper into ships' spikes and bolts, stronger and more resilient than the brittle "composition" fastenings which then were the only variety commercially available in the United States. Heretofore, malleable bolts and spikes could be had, if at all, only through expensive importation from abroad. Revere was to describe the lessons he had learned in a letter of March 1800 to the Honorable Harrison Gray Otis in Congress:

> I believe that you are not unacquainted with my being engaged in the Manufacture of Copper into Cannon, & Bells, for a number of Years, and suppose I have made the most improvements in that Branch of Metalurgy of any man in this State, if not in the United States. . . .
>
> Before the Frigate *Constitution* and the other two Ships were built the new merchant Ships that were to be Coppered, were Bolted & spiked with cast composition metal (Copper & Tin) which from its being brittle, did not answer the end. When the Copper came from England for the Above Frigate by some Accident a part of the Bolts were too large, I was applyed to by General Jackson

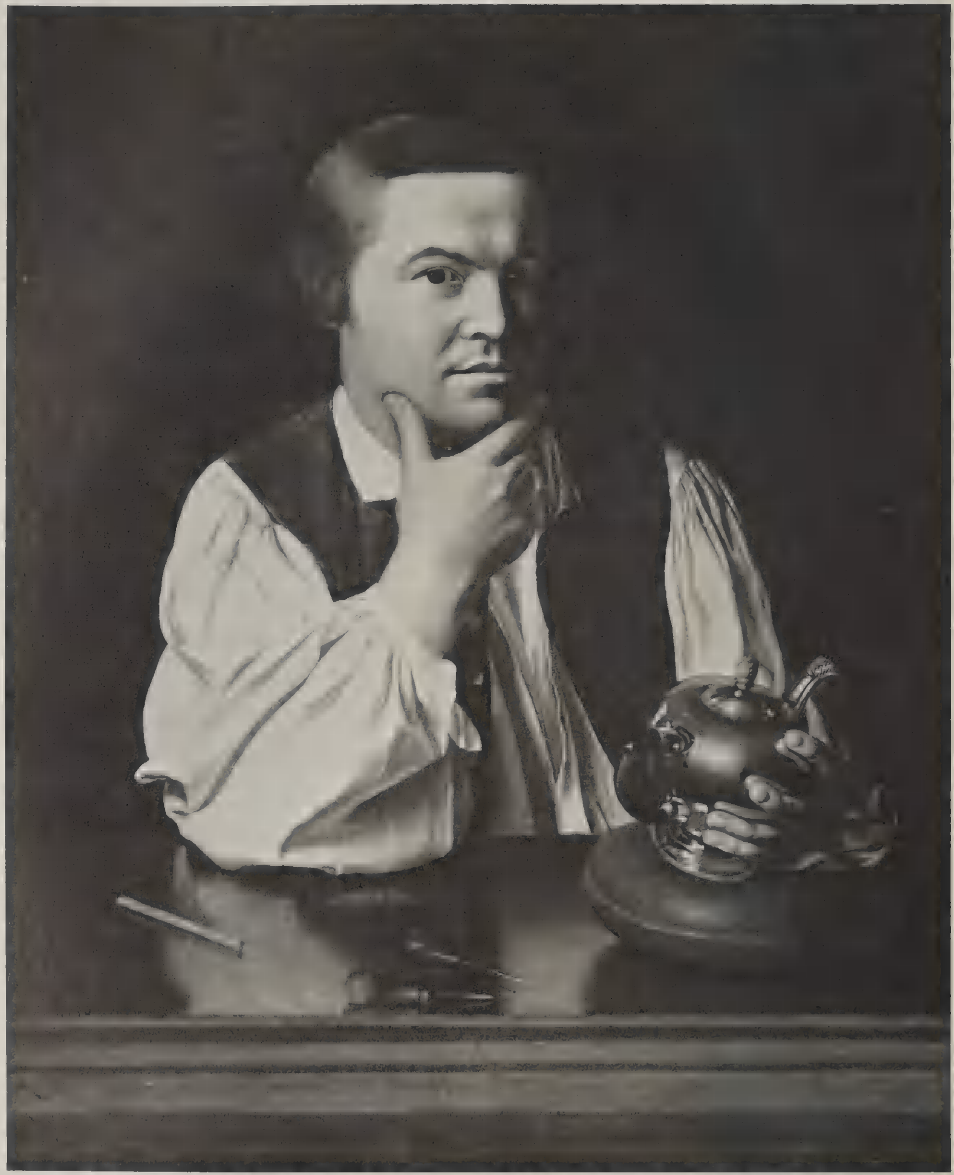


FIG. 22. Paul Revere (1735–1818), who provided the copper fastenings and most of the copper castings for the *Essex*. From an oil by John Singleton Copley.

> the Agent, to draw them smaller. I then found, that it was necessary that Bolts & Spikes for Ship building, should be made out of Maleable Copper. After discoursing with a Number of Old Copper Smiths, they one & all agreed, that they could not melt copper, and make it so maleable as to hammer it *Hot*. I farther found, that it was a Secret in Europe that lay in but very few Breasts.
>
> I determined if possible to gain the Secret. I have the satisfaction to say, that after a great many tryals and very considerable expense, I have so far obtained my wishes, that I did supply the *Constitution* for dove tails, Staples, Nails &c &c to the amount of 1000 Weight drawn from Copper of my Melting—Since which I . . . manufactured for the Ships *Boston*, and *Essex*, upwards of 10,000 Weigt of Copper into Bolts, & Spikes, from Old Copper.
>
> In the year 1798 I wrote the Secretary of the Navy upon the Matter, but received no answer, a Short time since, Colonel [Joshua] Humphries of Philadelphia, who is now on a tour to the Eastern parts of this State upon publick business, called upon me, in talking on the Manufacture of Copper, he was pleased to say, that He saw my letter to the Secretary, and that He beleived, he was the cause that my letter was not answered, that He asured Mr Stoddard that there was no person in America, that could make Copper Maleable so that it could be drawn in to Bolts, & Spikes. I have shewn him, and he accknowledges, that He was mistaken and gave me leave to make use of His Name. I have wrote again to Mr Stoddard on the Subject, I have refered him to you for my Character.
>
> Besides the Bolts & Spikes supplyed the *Boston* & *Essex* I have supplyed the Merchants of Boston, and Salem, with upwards of 15,000 weight. . . .

Revere submitted his proposals for the structural copper of the *Essex* to the Frigate Committee on 19 February 1799.

> I will engage to supply spikes for building the Frigate at Salem for fifty Cents Pr pound, to be properly made & drawn from Malable Copper.
>
> I will cast & finish the Rudder Braces & Pintles, and all other cast work that may be wanted for said Ship for thirty eight & one half Cents Pr pound.
>
> Should I have the Job of doing the Cast work, I will reduct four and one half Cents from the fifty, That is I will deliver the Spikes at forty five & one half Cents Pr pound. There may be wanted, Dovetails, Staples, Brads for Nailing on the Rudder Braces &c which I will Supply at the same price as the Spikes.

By the time the estimate arrived, Waters had been installed as the Committee's Agent. He laid the proposals before the Committee at its next meeting; then, on 26 February, advised Revere that although no decision had yet been reached with respect to the cast work it had been agreed that he should provide the fastenings. Those required would be from 7½ to 8½ inches in length.

"I wish that you would enquire of the Master Carpenter," Revere replied, "what will be the proportion; how many of 7 Inches, & how many 8½." The Master-Constructor of the frigate *Boston*, he pointed out, had a "Considerable number of 9 Inches," some of which, in fact, were subsequently freighted to Salem about the first of March. The first small shipment from Revere himself arrived in Salem aboard one of the daily Boston stages on the ninth of April, four days before the laying of the keel.

Throughout the initial dealings with Revere, there took place simultaneous efforts to contract for masts and spars. During the month of January 1799, Ichabod Nichols, acting on behalf of the Committee, had thrown out feelers to the suppliers of raw sticks. The first bid received, or, at least, the earliest document in The *Essex* Papers touching upon the matter, was submitted under date of 1 February 1799, at Bath, Maine, from Jonathan Gamell Davis. He proposed to furnish the rough trees for one bowsprit, one mainmast, one foremast, one mizzen mast, and two of all others specified (see Column 1 in the Table of Spar Dimensions in the Appendices), for a total of fifty-eight. All would be spruce except the bowsprit, the three lower masts, the three topmasts, and the main and fore yards which would be pine. Bowsprit and lower masts would be hewn sixteen-square when delivered to the sparmaker; topmasts, eight-square; the main and fore yards, the dimensions of which Davis was uncertain, would be supplied rough-hewn only. "We will procure them Surveyd," he proposed, "by any good Judge which may be Appointed & sent down to Bath, to view them; & deliver them at Salem in May Along Side of the Vessels that bring them for Seven Hundred Dollars."

Evidently, the Committee had reservations about the price and, perhaps, the wisdom of towing or rafting the trees up the coast to Salem during a season of possible inclement weather. It is unclear whether or not the Committee dealt further with Davis or sought a contract elsewhere. Ichabod Nichols, in any event, went off to Portsmouth on 16 February, hired a horse to continue on to Berwick, Maine, there conferred on the subject with one Jonathan Hamilton, and then returned to Salem. Two days later, Hamilton wrote to tell him what he had been able to accomplish after their meeting.

agreeble to my Promise to you Respcting the Compn^{y}, that you treted with [Davis?] to Serve you With a Sute of masts for your Frigate I accordingly have

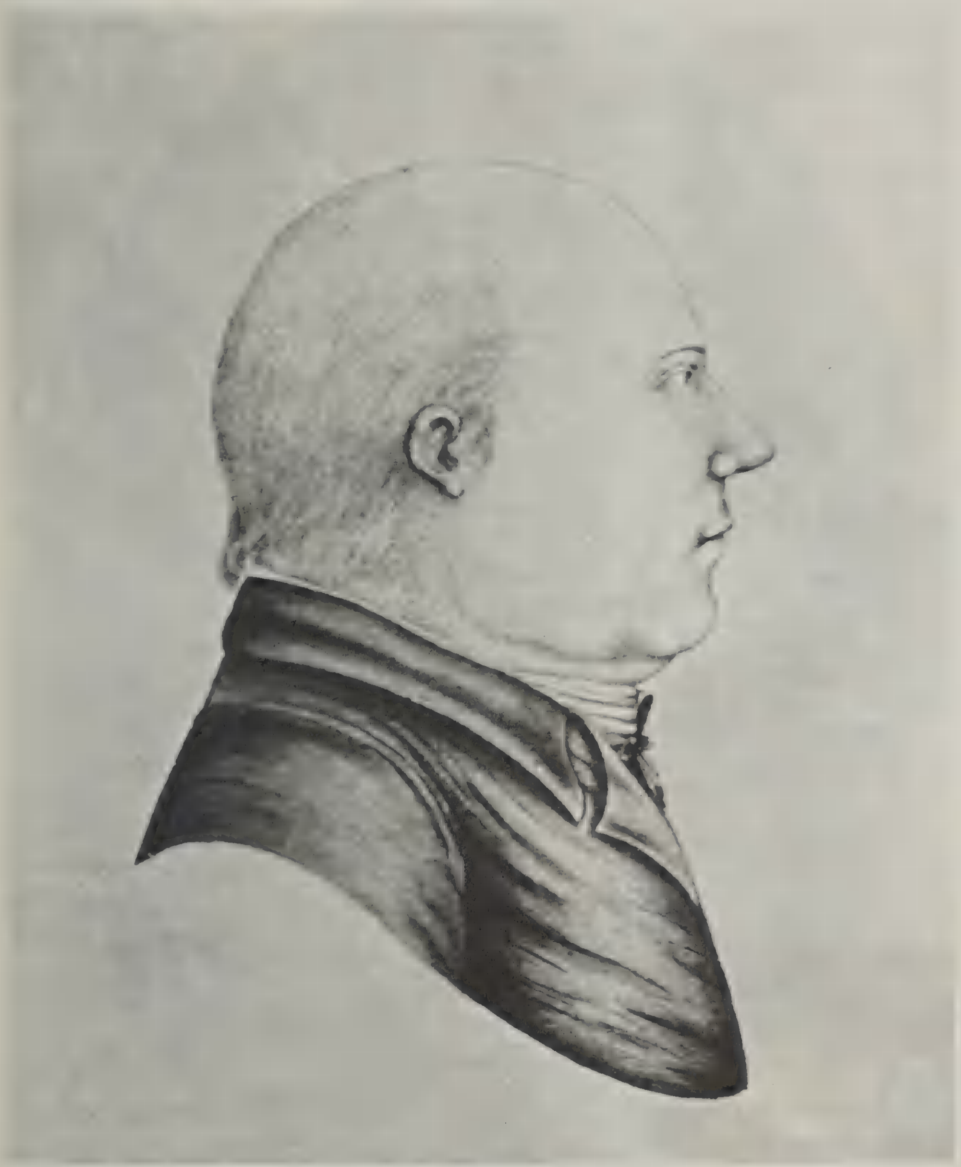


Fig. 23. Salem ship captain and merchant Benjamin Hodges (1754–1806), a member of the Salem Frigate Committee and business partner of Ichabod Nichols.

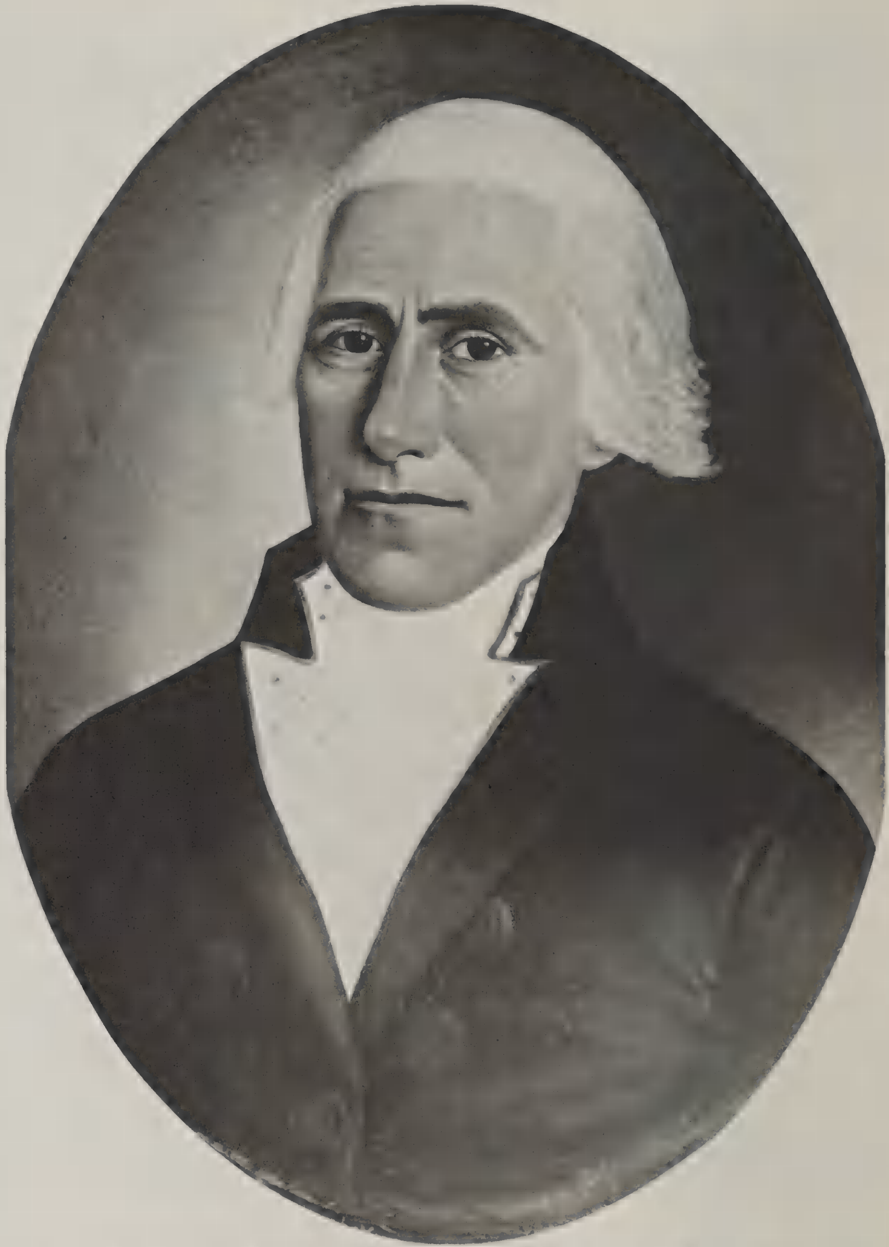


Fig. 24. Ichabod Nichols (1749–1839), the member of the Salem Frigate Committee who had charge of logistics until the appointment of Joseph Waters as Navy Agent.

> Seen them Persanly, as I Wisht if thay mite offer you any Terms that you thought Reasonable—thay & you mite agree—I beleve Since I have Converset With them that thay will Reduce the price Sum Proposed to you at Berwick as the Season of the Year Requires that on thir Part if any Contract should take place that no time must be lost as the masts must be Goat out by Sliding. . . .

"I have Recomended one of the Comp^y to Proceed Emeditly on to Salem," Hamilton went on. ". . . the Bearer of this Letter is M^r Nathanel Guptail Who is impowerd by the compny to make a Contract for the masts if you Can agree—if so I Will Garinentee any Contract that Said Guptail may make Binding him Self & Com^y. . . ."

Little time was lost in reaching a meeting of the minds. A formal contract was signed with Guptail on 20 February. Guptail, described as "Gentleman," agreed on his part "to furnish & deliver to said Ichabod Nichols & Benj^a Hodges, or their order at Portsmouth in the county of Rockingham & State of New Hampshire, at such Landing places as they shall direct, a full & compleat sett of Masts, Yards, & Spars as described & expressed in the Schedule following"—see Column 5 of the Table of Spars in the Appendices. Two of each description were to be furnished except the bowsprit, lower masts, driver boom, crossjack yard, and spritsail yards for which there would be but one. Bowsprit, lower masts, and main and fore yards would be pine; all else, spruce.

> And the said Nathaniel does covenant and agree to furnish a full compleat set of spars as described in the Schedule & contract, and warrants them delivered as expressed, free of any defect or injury whatever, on or before the Twentieth day of June next ensueing, at his own Expence without making any other charge than is hereafter expressly authorized—And the said Ichabod & Benj^a in consideration of the said Nathaniel, before mentioned, do hereby covenant and agree to pay him Two hundred dollars on demand, Two hundred dollars when the spars are delivered as before express'd, & Two hundred & sixty five dollars when the spars are all worked & proved fit for service, the Three several payments Making Six hundred & sixty five Dollars, and as further encouragement we Ichabod & Benj^a agree that on compleating the above contract we will pay fifteen dollars in addition to the above sum express'd.

Nichols' responsibility, however, did not end here. As a former resident of Portsmouth and, therefore, of all the Committeemen, the best suited to evaluate the competence of the various tradesmen in the lower Piscataqua, he had been drafted to engage the most capable and available person to produce the finished spars from the rough sticks. The man with whom he made contact was thirty-four-year-old Luke M. Laighton of Portsmouth.

Almost at once, relations between the two men became strained; Nichols, who had become too involved in his own commercial ventures to spare the thought or time to other problems, attempted to conclude the business with Laighton as swiftly as possible by forcing his hand and claiming that the estimate provided in fact amounted to a promise to do the work. Laighton thought otherwise but was not about to impeach his own honor by a withdrawal. What worried him most were the commitments he had made with Portsmouth Navy Agent Jacob Sheafe for work on the frigate *Congress*, finally being completed five years after her authorization.

I received your letter of the 16th Instant by the hand of Mr Melcher [Laighton wrote to Nichols on 26 March], you tell me that I must do the work or procure some other person, you also tell me that I have agreed for M^{r} Sheafe's work since I gave you what you consider as my Obligation but it is no more than my calculation what I supposed I could do the work for if I could attend to it. I had not an idea of your holding me as bound to do the work especially when you Observ'd that it should be nothing binding to me and that I should come to no damage by it. if you recollect I told you I was afraid I could not do the work because of making Carriages & other Jobs for the Frigate building by M^{r} Sheafe, this I engaged to do before I saw you. You ask me what I could mean when I requested you to give me the earleyest Notice if it was concluded by the committe that I should do the work, You misunderstood me, my request was to know if the work was to be done here or not. Of course I should wish to know that for the sooner I know the sooner I could determine whether to undertake the work or not, in respect to the something or nothing I ment it to Oblidge You, for Your information I supposed it was. as to Cawling I am not disposed to, and am sorry if you think I am, for if I had past my word to do the work, I would if I made but one Shilling pr Day. I am sorry there has been so much misunderstanding between us, but if you still desire me to do the work I will undertake to do the best I can, if you & the committe will consider my calculation as I realy ment it that was to compleet the workmanship of said work only—for the oak stuff I cannot find at my own expence, & the batt[en]ing of the Yards was not mentioned, therefore I did not calculate for it if you had said you wanted me to find the stuff & batting Yards I should made a different calculation. I have reconed the work by the same price Mr Marden had for doing the Portsmouth work, which is not enough for this Ship, the work is so much larger I am sorry things should happen as thay have for in looking over Your first dimentions I find I omitted carting two Main two Fore & two Miz^{n} topmast, which I should expect to be rectified You & the Gentlemen of the committe will not refuse this when you consider I was not so perticular in my calculation as I should have been if I thot at that time you would insisted on my doing the work. You will consider it is too much to come out of one's pockett stationed as I am to git my living by hard blows & but triftling out of so many as is concerned in building the Frigate. You say you are willing to allow a reasonable concideration for the work. What I now ask you for doing the work I do not expect to make Eight Shillings a Day and I cannot hire a man to asist me under that price that is acquainted with Mast work. There is no dependence to be put on M^r Melcher by his own talk, since he was in Salem and M^r Marden is engaged and has been this some time

One hundred & fifty pounds is what I supposd I could do the workmanship of said work for, Nine pound sixteen is what the making of the six Topmast that I omitted carting up comes to—and the time it takes to batting Yards must be allowed me, the paying the Mast work over, and providing Oak Stuff must be charged to you. . . .

PS I understand Capt Ward comes to Portsmouth this week please to write by him, if the above is agreeable to you please to send me the particular Dimensions as soon as you can, on Account of Makeing the Oak Work.

It must be supposed that Nichols either ignored him as a dishonorable man beneath contempt or was mistakenly under the impression that Waters had already picked up the threads of correspondence. Laighton, as a result, would receive no answer or satisfaction for another six weeks, by which time Nichols and the remainder of the Committee had faded inconspicuously into the background.

Meanwhile, a wide variety of forces had begun to marshal in a diverse mosaic around a single focus—Joseph Waters. Further contracts for shot, sailcloth, anchors, casks, ironwork, and cordage were being formulated and concluded. Once the keel had been laid, the tedious and often immeasurable preparatory phase came to an end; from that point forward, progress—or the lack of it—became an acutely visible test of competent management.

NOTES

Another document pertaining to the frigate *Boston*, in addition to the agreement with the joiners, lists her spar dimensions (below):

	feet		*feet*
Mainmast	80	Mizzen topmast	42
Foremast	73	Main topgallant mast (hoist)	38
Mizzen mast	71½	Fore topgallant mast (hoist)	36
Bowsprit (from bows)	36	Mizzen topgallant mast (hoist)	22
Main yard	67	Main topgallant yard	39
Fore yard	62	Fore topgallant	
Crossjack yard	51		
Main topsail yard	51		
Fore topsail yard	46		

Mizzen topsail yard	40	yard	34
Mizzen boom	48	Mizzen topgallant yard	28
Main topmast	52½	Gaff	39
Fore topmast	49½	Jibboom	39

Paul Revere (1735–1818) acquired the old millsite on the Neponset River where gunpowder had been made during the Revolution. He bought the property in 1801 to set up his rolling mill for sheet copper at Cantondale. His letter to Harrison Gray Otis is in The Revere Family Papers, 1800–1819, at the Massachusetts Historical Society; his letter stating his terms for supplying the *Essex*'s fastenings did not come to the Peabody Museum with The *Essex* Papers but was purchased from a dealer and was given to the Museum in 1943 by Augustus P. Loring, Jr.

A short history of early copper sheathing is given by R. J. B. Knight, "The Introduction of Copper Sheathing into the Royal Navy, 1779–1786," *The Mariner's Mirror*, LIX (1973), No. 3, 299–309.

It will be noticed that the principals in the story avoided traveling to Portsmouth or to Boston in the public stagecoaches whenever possible, preferring to hire horses and chaises from Richard Manning, Jr.'s stable as quicker and more comfortable. Boston and Portsmouth are some fifteen and fifty miles distant from Salem, respectively. The trip in the stage from Salem to Boston lasted nearly three hours, while that from Salem to Portsmouth took about twelve. In 1799, there were three daily stages between Boston and Salem, Sundays excepted when there were none. Two arrived at Boston at 11 A.M. and left Boston at 3 P.M. The other left Boston at 8 A.M., arriving back at 6 P.M. A fourth, the Cape Ann stage, stopped at Salem about mid morning, eastbound on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and westbound on Tuesdays and Fridays. The Portsmouth stage, which called at Salem both coming and going, left Boston Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 3 o'clock in the morning and got into Portsmouth at 6 o'clock in the evening. It returned on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at the same hours.

One list of spars now in The *Essex* Papers (see Column 4 of the dimensions given in the Appendices) was given to the Peabody Museum in 1892 by Enos Briggs' granddaughter, Mrs. G. P. Farrington. It is in his handwriting.

Luke M. Laighton was born in 1765 and died in 1834. His wife Elizabeth died in 1854, aet. 87. He became a Selectman of Portsmouth from 1807 to 1810. The 1827 Portsmouth *Directory* gives his occupation at that time as blockmaker, his home and shop then being on Mechanic Street near the waterfront.

CHAPTER 6

April-May 1799

TO picture in imagination the scene upon Winter Island during the spring and summer of 1799 calls for a form of self-hypnosis whereby, as when a fogbank rolls in off the ocean and blurs the landscape, the realities of the modern world dissolve into amorphous, two-dimensional silhouettes which may be transfigured into whatever shapes one cares to make of them. Suddenly, the tumbledown earthworks of Fort Pickering take on the outline of Fort William with the Stars and Stripes snapping from the flagstaff at the entry port. The abandoned lighthouse-keeper's cottage, deprived of perspective or of relative position to its surroundings, assumes the mass of Rochefontaine's blockhouse within the ramparts. The stone retaining wall on the beach with the tarmac apron and helicopter pads of the disused Coast Guard Air Station blend into a broad, sloping meadow, while the loom of the aircraft hangar could be a domed hillock in the distance or an outsized casemate adjacent to the fort. What in brilliant sunlight is a decaying seaplane ramp in the mists becomes the groundways of a shipyard building slip. It takes little more to imagine a Salem East Indiaman ghosting out through the channel under the frames of the *Essex* frigate.

Week by week, the *Essex* took on form and substance in this cove. The upper slopes of the meadow, covered with piles of compass timber and planking, became alive with the comings and goings of the shipyard horses and oxen, adzemen hewing out the shapes dictated by the mold-loft patterns, and the sawyers, bobbing like mechanical figures powered by toy windmills, in a continuous, backbreaking motion from sunrise to the end of the workday at sunset. At one side, smoke pouring from the chimney and clangings ringing loudly through its unshuttered windows, stood Alden Briggs' blacksmith shop. Small coasters lay offshore to discharge deck loads of plank from the Merrimac River, spikes and bolts from the temporary storehouses on Union Wharf in the South River, or kentledge from Portsmouth and New York. Over them all towered the hull, engulfed in shores, catwalks, staging, and the ant-like activity of the shipwrights.

Sometimes in his house beyond the Common, sometimes in a counting room on Union Wharf, and othertimes in the small field office at the yard

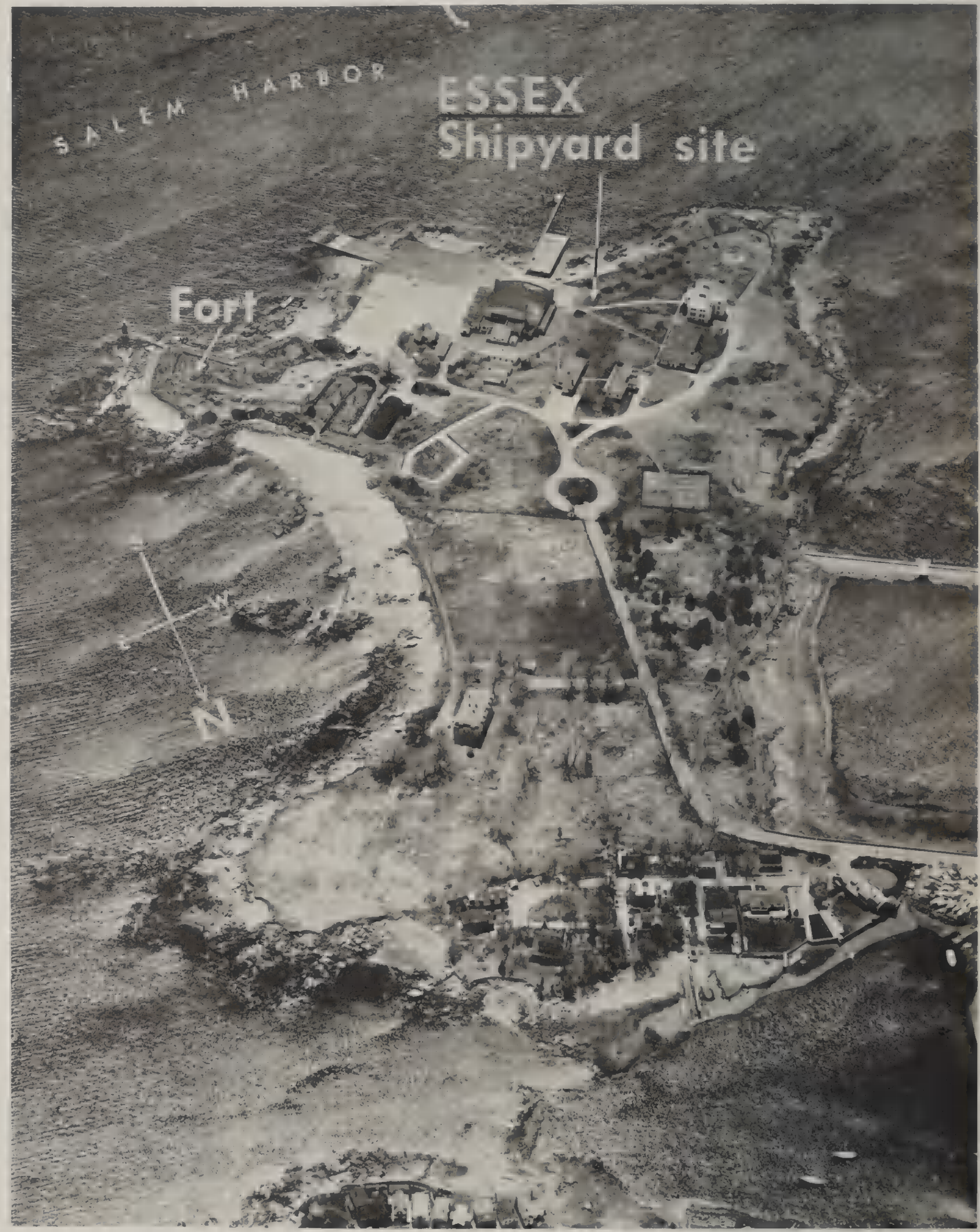


FIG. 25. Aerial view of Winter Island, taken during the early 1970s, showing the disused United States Coast Guard Air Station on the site of the beach and meadow where the *Essex* was built. The entrance to Salem Harbor is to the left of the remains of the fort.

worked Joseph Waters, surrounded by mounting paperwork and constantly increasing stores of equipment. Although to the ordinary observer the rapid progress made by the shipwrights may have seemed remarkable, neither Briggs nor Hackett was satisfied. Briggs, in fact, had gone so far as to persuade the Frigate Committee to increase his contract price from thirty to thirty-one dollars a ton in order to hire more men and expedite the building. Since adequate manpower was unavailable around Salem, Hackett made a swift reconnaissance of the Merrimac River towns to recruit more men, but even there competition was fierce. On the twenty-fourth of April, as a late spring snowstorm drew out a long winter longer still, he sent word back to Waters that his mission had met with only partial success.

> M^{r} Marten the Carpendor mentiond will Com with me Monday or Tusday nexts, to agree for himself & 5 or 6 more, who are eng[age]^{d} till his return—
>
> Fowler the Joyner Coms on the Least of the week to agree for himself & 2 or 3 more, who are held till his return, which is the best I Can Do at this time as their is a Ship to be bul^{t} in this Place for the Contenant to be Lanch^{d} by Sep^{t} to Cary 18 9 Pounders, & the Ship at Merrels to be Lanch^{d} in July which will wants More Carpendors than their is in this Place, So they are Generely engaged to work on one or the other that will Give most—
>
> Cap^{t} Nich^{s} Johnson [the Navy Agent at Newburyport] told me the Presedant had ordered 16 to be bult by that time which Cals the Carpendors to Look out for What they Can Git
>
> I Should ben Glad to have writ by Las Post, but Could not Git ready till now. . . .
>
> PS I thot the above Mathord best to be Shuer of holding them.

On the twenty-third of April, while Hackett was going about his business in the Merrimac yards, Waters rode the morning stage into Boston to treat with the Boston frigate committee for surplus equipment and materials originally acquired for the frigate *Boston* but never used. The principal items included a galley stove, an armorer's forge, and a quantity of copper sheathing and fastenings.

The stove, known as a "caboose" or "camboose," had been imported on the account and risk of Messrs. David Sears and Thomas Handasyd Perkins from the London mercantile firm of Thomas Dickason & Company and had been offered to the Boston committee which, for reasons not entirely clear, did not accept it. It may have been that the dimensions of the caboose, which unfortunately are not enumerated, proved too massive for the available space

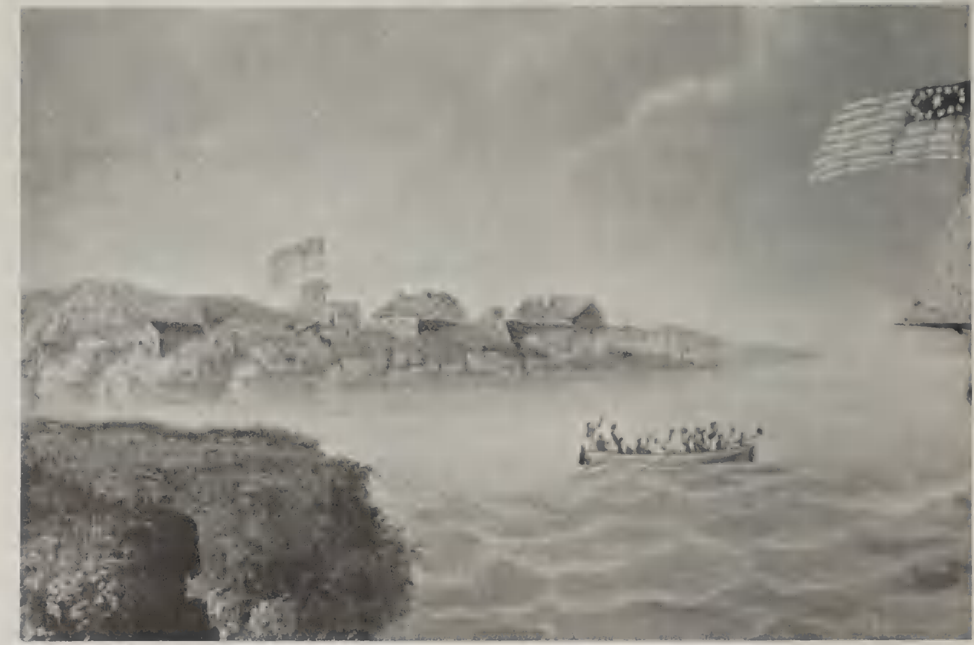


FIG. 26. Fort William (later Fort Pickering) on Winter Island as seen from within the harbor in a detail from a painting by Michele Felice Cornè. The *Essex* was built in front of it on a beach hidden by the rocks.

below decks in the *Boston.* It is known that when shipped from London it had to be partially dismantled before it could be stowed aboard the ship transporting it. The detailed description of its parts and accompanying gear, reproduced in the Appendices, leaves little room to doubt that it was a Brodie stove—so-called after Alexander Brodie, the patentee—the type employed in ships of the Royal Navy from the early years of the 1780's until superseded by a range of more advanced design in 1810. A wooden replica of one, measuring 6′ 6¾″ by 6′ 3½″, is still to be seen in position aboard H.M.S. *Victory* at Portsmouth Dockyard, England.

The armorer's forge had been imported with the caboose and is also described in the Appendices. When Waters heard of the copper and equipment, he agitated to procure them for the *Essex*. Jacob Sheafe, the Navy Agent at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had his eye on them as well for use in the *Congress*, but, as Sears wrote to Waters, "as we presume you made some dependence on them [we] have given you the preference." The $1,473.88 cost of the forge and caboose was debited not to the subscription account but to the books of the Accountant of the Navy.

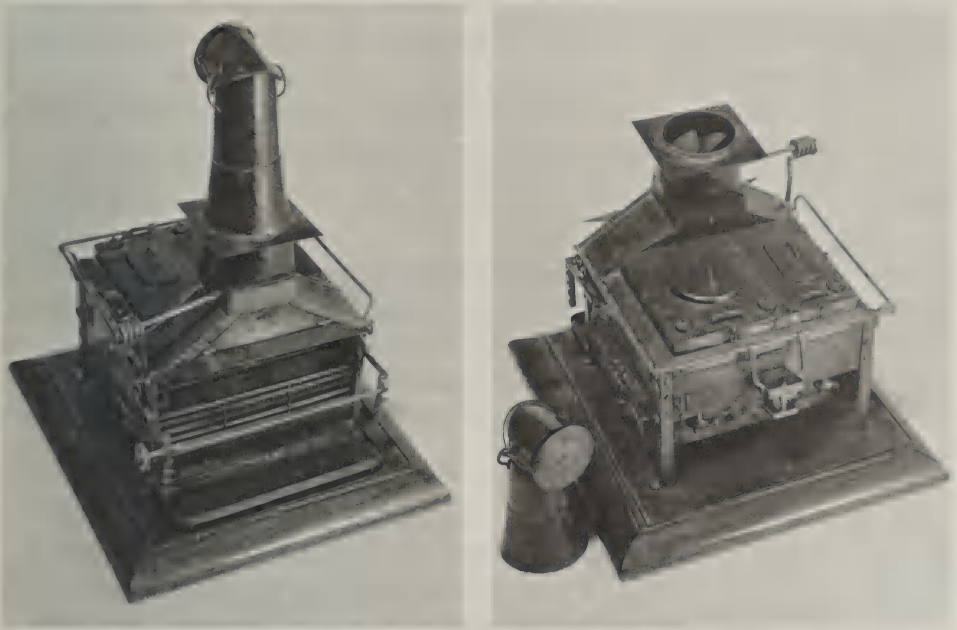


FIG. 27. A contemporary model of a Brodie Stove, the type of caboose, or galley stove, used aboard the *Essex*.

This was not the last time that Waters and Sheafe would spar delicately for materials suitable for the completion of their vessels. The Boston committee's stock of sheathing copper caused another minor collision between the competing agents. The expediency of taking possession of sufficient quantities of sheathing as early in the building process as possible had been in the minds of both men for some time. Sheafe's anxiety to get hold of it was well-founded because the *Congress* would need it well before the early-August date estimated for the *Essex*. He had been no stranger to short rations of materials for the *Congress*. When peace with Algiers had previously halted her construction, much of his stockpiles of timber and equipment had been spirited away from under his nose to supply either the carpenters building the Dey's tribute frigate *Crescent* or those continuing work at Boston on the *Constitution*.

Even as early as March, the Secretary of the Navy had given assurances to Waters that sheathing copper would be made available from the reserves at Boston, a promise by no means unknown to Sheafe who somewhat grudgingly had been informed that he must be content with whatever was left over after the *Essex* had been supplied. At Boston, Waters was told by committeeman William Parsons that, notwithstanding, Sheafe had made further application for the copper, thereby suggesting the wisdom of a direct communication between the two agents to put the matter in its proper perspective. Without examining the sheathing, apparently, and without taking note of the quantity, Waters returned to Salem in the afternoon stage and scribbled a note to Sheafe the following morning.

Sir

I Was at Boston Yesterday and Waited on the Gentlemen Committe for Building the Frigate thear for the Copper Copper Nails Combouse Agreeable to Orders Received from the Secretary of the Navy One of the Committe Mr Parsons Said You had Applied for the Copper & hee had wrote You on the Subgeckt & Wisht me to write You a Line on my Return to Salem—hear Follows the Secratary Letter of March 16th 99

Sir

the Committe at Boston will Delever to Your Order a Quanaty of Copper Copper Bolts and a Coumbbuce for which You will give them Duplacate Receipts, theas Artickles Are to bee Applied for the Use of the Salem Ship Your Obt St Ben Stoddert.

Pleas to Drop a Line on Receat of this
From Sir Your Obt St
Joseph Waters
Navall Agent

Sheafe's reply on 26 April reflected his continuing concern with his own problems of supply.

I recd your favr on the 24th of this instt respecting some copper &c—The secretary of the Navy some time ago inform'd me that Mr Parsons would deliver me some sheet Copper for sheathing & some Bolts it is only the sheet Copper that I want for our Frigate & I have written to the secretary again about the matter & in all probability we shall want the sheathing Copper for the *Congress* two months before you will want yours.

Stoddert, nevertheless, upheld what he had already written to Sheafe on the eleventh of the month—"With respect to copper I shall take arrangements for sending it to you, as it will not do to take that which is intended for the Ship at Salem"—and supplied him from government stores elsewhere. Assured of the Boston copper, Waters turned his attention elsewhere.

Sails and sailcloth received no mention until Waters' report to Stoddert on 24 April. By then, production of the duck was progressing well, and he was able to inform the Secretary that he had also contracted with the sailmakers for one suit of sails.

> I Should wish to no What the Goverment Expeckts me to procure for the ship As sume Contrackts hav ben Made by me on accout of the Subscribers for Duck to Comepleate One Sute of Sailes & for Ankors in part—What the ship will want —& had I Felt my Self fully Authorised to have Contracked for the full Quanaty of Duck & Ankors I should have Done itt—As no Doubt the Ship will have more than One Sute of Sails When Shea Goes to See & More Ankors than the Committe will furnish—the Manafacktouers Are at worck in this town on the Saile Cloths & the Ankors Are a Making About two miles from town.

The first three bolts of cloth, in fact, although he neglected to mention it, had come off the looms within the week.

"Two Suits of Sails are absolutely necessary for a Ship of War," Stoddert was quick to reply, "you will please therefore to have one complete Suit, in addition to that to be furnished by the Committee, prepared in time."

"The Duck for the Second Sute of Sales," Waters would answer him on the twenty-eighth of May, "I have not been Able to Agree for Yet at the Facktory hear—there being doubtfull About Geting the Meatearals for itt But am Still in hopes of Geting them made hear As the Duck is of a Supearour Qualety of Any that I have Seen made in this Country before & meets the Approbation of all that has Saw itt."

It would not be possible. The Salem Duck Manufactory was a small, primitive operation with fewer than two dozen employees in all capacities working during the late spring peak of activity. Even had ample supplies of flax been available, it is doubtful if the weavers could have increased production to any significant degree. In the end, Waters was forced to acquire the additional duck from imported stores available around Salem.

The Salem Duck Manufactory was a one-story wooden building, 200 feet long by twenty-six wide, adjacent to the burying ground in Broad Fields and bordered on two sides by present-day Summer and Broad Streets. Built in 1790 by another subscription among the merchants and ship owners, the Duck Manufactory, if the fragmentary scraps of remaining information may be relied upon, never became the success hoped for by the original backers. After staggering along for several years, a scarcity of flax caused the shareholders to begin selling out. The operation may have continued in a limited fashion almost to the time the *Essex* was built, but more likely it did not. The machinery and physical plant, in any case, had survived into the last year of the decade when the manufactory appears to have been reopened during the early months of 1799 for the express purpose of weaving the duck for the *Essex*. How long it continued to operate after that, if at all, has not been discovered. Eventually, the building was turned into a twine factory; then, about 1818, was removed altogether to make way for a new town school. The Oliver School still stands upon the site.

Under the management of Captain Daniel Rust, the twenty-seven-year-old owner of a twine factory on the other side of town, the old Duck Manufactory began gearing up for its new task in early March 1799 when Rust made several hurried trips into Boston in search of adequate quantities of flax. While he was occupied in that way, maintenance work started within the manufactory—procurement of new loom harnesses, repairs to the wheel bands, refurbishing combing hatchels, and so on. A hemp dresser, preparing the flax for spinning, had been hard at work since the beginning of the month. By the end of March, five women and girls had begun to spin "chains" (the warp), five others were spinning "filling" (the woof), Benjamin Moulton, for the weekly wage of £1 4s 0d, was bending his back six days a week to turn the great wheel that powered the individual spindles, while four helping girls danced attendance on them all.

During the first weeks the duck for the *Essex* was being made, the spinners, flax dresser John Robinson and his helpers, Benjamin Moulton, and the tending girls worked feverishly to stockpile yarn. The weavers commenced their operations during the week of 16 April and continued without pause until the middle of September, averaging ten bolts off the looms a week but never exceeding fifteen. On 6 July, the spinners with John Robinson's gang, who by then had dressed some five tons of flax, finished their work and left, leaving behind only the weavers, quillwinders, and doublers. In all, the manufactory wove just over 205 bolts of sailcloth in seven grades, heavy to light, by the middle of September when all activity ceased. Each bolt averaged about thirty-nine yards, all together enough for one complete suit of sails with a little to spare. Further statistics are given in the Appendices.

The sailmakers with whom Joseph Waters had contracted were Buffum & Howard, a partnership consisting of Samuel Buffum (1744–1818) and John Howard (1755–1848).

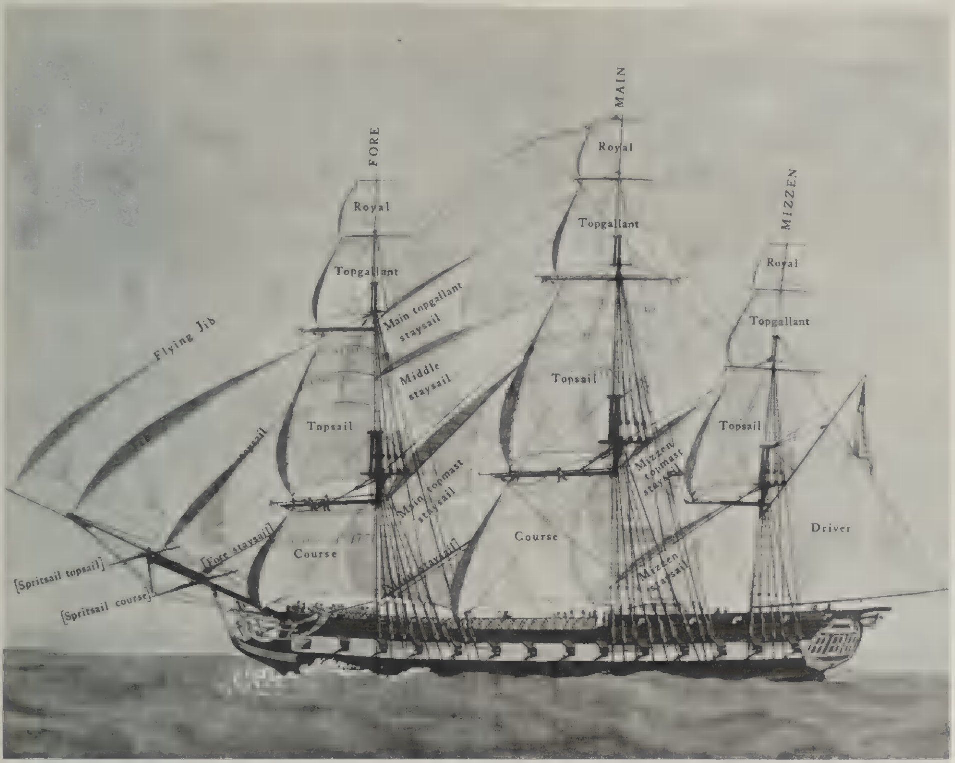


FIG. 28. The principal sails of the *Essex*, the names of which have been superimposed upon a photograph of Joseph Howard's contemporary watercolor of her.

Buffum, according to the Reverend William Bentley, was "A singular character." As a sailmaker, he was "a pattern of fidelity, as a friend, unbounded in his services, but he had a strange antipathy to everything not English. Fond of Company, he was often at the public houses & long with innocence. At last the serpent bit him. He had no weakness but intemperance & yet he had no enemies. All found that all weakness did not prevent the purposes of his heart to others."

John Howard was a transplanted Marbleheader from the boisterous fishing town adjoining Salem to the south. He was the son of a highly respected Marblehead merchant whose familiarity with seven languages caused his fellow townsmen to bring their foreign correspondence to him for translation. At the age of fourteen, John Howard had been apprenticed to Marblehead sailmaker John Ingalls, who was associated with Henry Lane. When Ingalls died in 1772, Lane continued independently, but Ingalls' widow then married

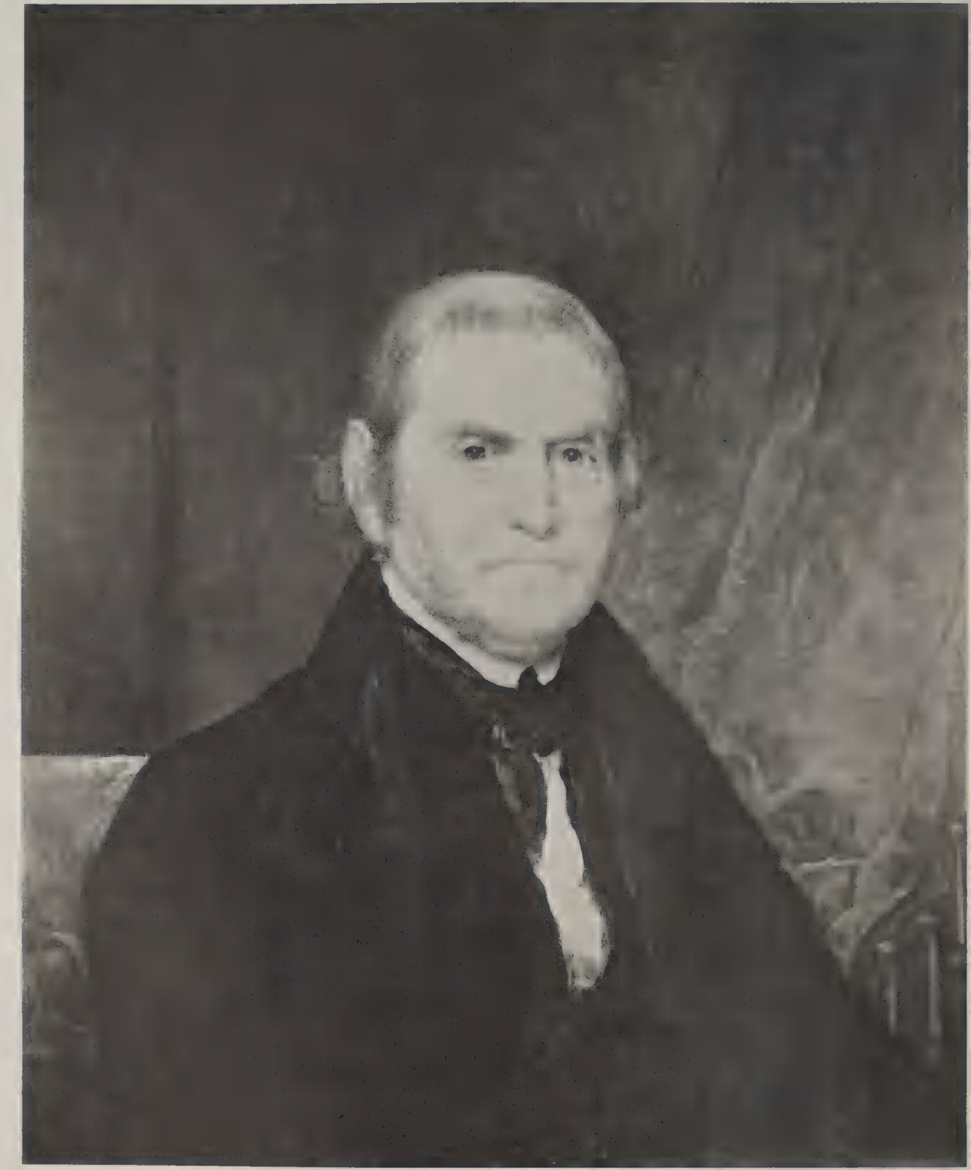


FIG. 29. John Howard (1755–1848), co-partner of Samuel Buffum, sailmakers, who made the original sails for the *Essex*. From an oil by Charles Osgood.

Captain William Courtis, another Marblehead sailmaker, whereupon Howard went to work for him. In 1775, he enlisted in Colonel John Glover's Marblehead Regiment and later served under Captain Samuel Tucker in one of George Washington's armed fleet of Marblehead schooners. Eventually, he went to Boston to make tents but after several moves settled in Salem where he found employment in the sail loft of Joseph Moses. When Moses gave up his trade in 1779, Howard took over the loft, where, for the next fifteen years, he, Buffum, and John Orne continued to make sails. Orne then left, but the firm of Buffum & Howard continued until 1812 when it was dissolved by mutual consent. Howard was to pursue the business by himself for another twenty-seven years before retiring. When he died in 1848, he was, at ninety-three, the oldest living man in Salem and had been a Selectman, Representative to the Great and General Court, and founding president of the Salem Charitable Mechanic Association. It was his eldest son, Joseph, who painted the only known contemporary portrait of the *Essex*.

The other local contract made about the same time involved the manufacture of the anchors. For a vessel the size of the *Essex*, Stoddert had suggested to Waters that he obtain four bowers of thirty-three hundredweight each, one stream anchor of eight hundredweight, and one kedge of four hundredweight. By the time the ship put to sea in December, she had been equipped with all these plus a spare light kedge, three small anchors for the ship's boats, and two iron creepers or grapnels. Two of the bowers and one kedge were paid for by the Navy; the remainder by the subscription account.

The seven largest were manufactured by the Salem Iron Factory Company in neighboring Danvers; the others by Seth Brooks, one of a "choice band of Brothers" who had come to Salem from Woburn and who, after Alden Briggs, was the chief blacksmith employed on the *Essex*.

The Salem Iron Factory had been established in 1796 by Nathan Read of Salem with a company of shareholders, among whom were most of the more prominent Salem merchants including all those who later served on the Frigate Committee. Read, an inventive genius with many innovative gadgets to his credit, ultimately held patents for several devices including one to cut and head nails in a single operation. His career had been exceptionally varied. Born at Warren, Massachusetts in 1759, he graduated from Harvard College in 1781, for several years afterwards was a tutor there, then came to Salem to study medicine under Dr. Edward Augustus Holyoke, gave that up, and finally opened an apothecary shop on Essex Street. In 1795, he had

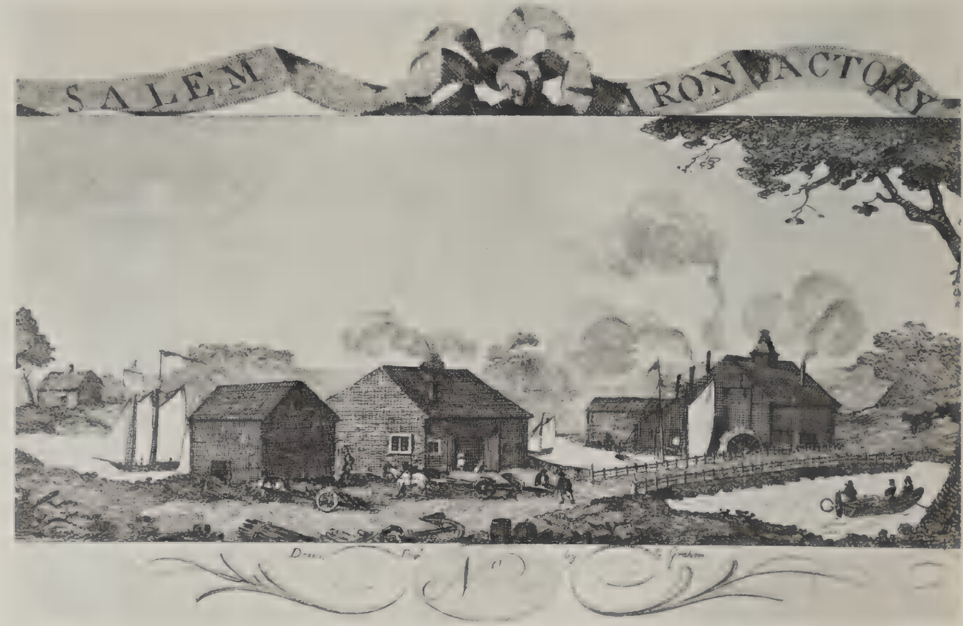


Fig. 30. A view of the Salem Iron Factory, Waters' River, Danvers, Massachusetts, from an engraving on the company's stock certificate. Here, the principal anchors for the *Essex* were manufactured.

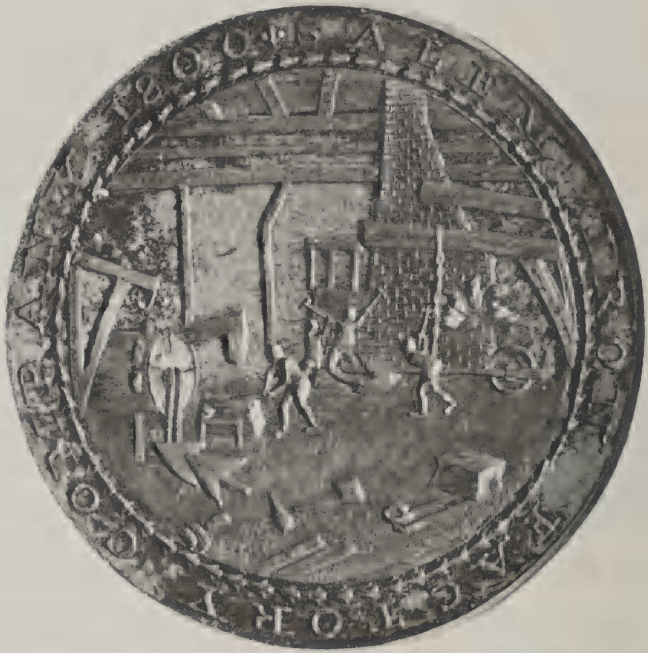


Fig. 31. The corporate seal of the Salem Iron Factory, showing the forge, trip hammer, and anchors being made.

removed to his farm a few hundred yards north of the Salem town line into Danvers, where he built a combination bridge and milldam across the Waters River, the nucleus of his slitting mill and ironworks scheme consummated the following year. Appointed a member of Congress in 1800 to fill a vacant seat, he later removed to Maine and became Chief Justice of Hancock County.

The factory produced a wide assortment of goods—slit and rolled iron, shapes, nails, nail plates, hoops, shovels, scythes, sleigh shoes, chain cables, and anchors. Anchors, although sometimes manufactured to order, usually were made on speculation; yearly inventories frequently revealed a quantity in stock of thirty to forty-five anchors of various sizes and types. Read subcontracted the manufacture of anchor palms to independent operators such as Jonathan Holmes & Sons of Kingston or Leonard & Kinsley in Stoughton, Massachusetts. From all accounts, he labored under constant difficulty throughout the months the *Essex* was under construction due to the procrastination of the palm makers. Completion of several of the anchors was delayed almost to the eleventh hour as a result, but Bower No. 1 was carted from the factory by Samuel Ward on 20 May, was weighed at the hay scales near the Common, as was customary in such cases, and was then hauled onto Union Wharf for storage.

In early May, sparmaker Luke M. Laighton, who still had heard nothing from Ichabod Nichols in reply to his letter of 26 March, wrote to him again. "Dear sir," he said in mounting desperation. "I wish to have the dimensions of the Frigates Work as soon as is convenient, please to send me the bigness of the Tops, I should be to work on them now if I know the dimentions of them I can do nothing to the Oak Work untill I know the bigness of the lower Mast, Top Mast, & T[op] G[allant] mast, I have a complete piece of Elm timber fit for lower Caps If you approve of it, which I think superior to Oak it is not subject to rent with the sun—it will be an Advantage to me to know the bignes of the Tops by the first Oppertunity, as I can work on them between whiles."

Laighton's letter arrived in Salem on 8 May and was answered the same day—by Waters, not by Nichols. Should he find from his own experience that the accompanying dimensions were incorrect, Waters responded soothingly, he might alter them accordingly; if the piece of elm were as good as Laighton's recommendation there were "no Obgecktions to Your making the Caps from itt As its Nececery that the Caps Should be Maid from the Best Meatearels." Finally, and no doubt to Laighton's immeasurable relief, Waters pointed out that all future correspondence should be directed to him. He was proposing, furthermore, to come to Portsmouth himself within a few days to confer not only with Laighton but with Elisha Hill, 3rd, who was to have the contract for the ironwork associated with the masts and spars.

Before he could leave, however, Waters had first to rally Paul Revere, whose shipments of spikes were not keeping pace with the needs of the shipwrights. The load of 135 pounds delivered by the Boston stage on 17 May brought Revere's total to date to only 468 pounds; Enos Briggs' gang was using them up faster than they could be sent down. "Burrill the Stage Man," Waters had admonished him the day before, "will Call on You for Sume Spikes which You will bee pleasd to Delever him & Charge to the Ship *Essex*."

> I am Disapointed [he went on] in Capt Archers not Bringing Sume Down, As I Am a fraid that wee Shall Whait for them—thoues you Sent Down by Burrill Are 1/3 not more than Six Inches & wont Do for us at Any Rate & half the outhers Ones are Long Spikes Suteable for the thick worck under the Bends—You will be pleasd to Lett thowes You Send now, not bee Less than 8 Inches & not more than [*torn*] As Thear wanted for the Runing planck—our work Goes on fast—& of Coars wee Shall bee Caling for a Great many spikes I hope We shant Want for them. I Should have Come to Boston to Day to See you on the Subjeckt but am Detaind About Mast worck of the Ship—Sir Should Any of our Salem Co[a]sters Call on You in the Coars of the Weeck You will Let them have what You have made. As the Bringing them in the Stage is much more Expensive, than by the Coasters—Sir the 6 Inch Spikes I Shall Turn over to Capt^{ns} Nickals & Hodges—& Inform You of the Weight of them—You will be pleasd to Drop me a Line by Burrill & Inform me the Situation you are in About the Spikes.

Hiring a horse and chaise from Manning's stable on 17 May, Waters went to Boston to impress upon Revere the urgent need if work on the hull were not to come to an abrupt halt. In his zeal to serve the seafaring community, Revere had recently agreed to another contract—a private one—with Ichabod Nichols and his business partner Benjamin Hodges to provide fastenings for their ship *Active*, then in frame at Retire Beckett's shipyard. The result was an unfortunate conflict in Revere's time and limited supply of copper, not to mention considerable confusion arising from instructions given him by Nichols & Hodges on their own account and others which involved the *Essex* in their capacity as members of the Frigate Committee.

"The Spikes I Receved of You Yesterday," Waters informed him after his return to Salem,

> will bee Nearly all Expended to Day I hope the Salem Coster will Bring Sume Down by Mondy—You Observd—When I Was in Boston that You had 100^{lb} of 7½ Inches made—Since my Return I have Aquainted the Master woorkman of itt, And he Says Thea Will Answer, the Reason of my writing You [on 16 May] not to Send Any Less than 8 Inches was a Mistake by M^{r} Brigs for thowes hee Took for the 7½ Inches Whear the Spikes that You Intended for Messrs Nickols & Hogges—& on Measuring them found them Not 7 Inches & hee Says that 7½ Will do for the Runing planck—& youll bee pleasd to Send the 7½ Inches on Mondy by Burrill if posable in the Morning Stage. . . .

Revere's great stumbling block appears to have been his inability to acquire enough old copper quickly enough to keep abreast of his commitments. "There is some person in Salem that has about 3000^{lb} of old Copper for sale," he told Waters. "Dennis & Waters tryed to engage it for me, but wether they were afraid of the pay from them, or what, I cannot tell but they write me they cannot git it. Will you be kind enough to enquire of them, who the persons is, & try to procure it for me at One Shilling & five pence P^{r} pound, for which the money shall be paid on delivery."

Not only was Waters equally unsuccessful but continuing confusion lasted almost throughout the month of May. The hundred pounds of 7½ inch spikes now turned out to be 6½ inchers instead, an error perhaps occasioned by miscalculation in the effects of uneven heading. In acute frustration, Revere quoted back to Waters the instructions Enos Briggs had asked Waters to pass on to him: "'he informs me that ¾ will be from 6½ to 7 Inches & ¼ from 8 to 9 Inches.'" Continued a harassed Revere: "I wished to conform to your directions: You may depend I will do all in my power so as to supply you, as that you shall not stand still. I send by Burrill 236^{lb} & will endeavour to send as many more on Wednesday."

One thousand sixty-one pounds of copper fastenings had been delivered to Winter Island by the end of May, while at the same time much of the misunderstanding arising from Nichols & Hodges' private contract was finally clarified. "Your favor of Yesterday has Come to hand," Waters wrote to Revere on the last day of the month, "—the Master Builder thinks that five hundred lb More will bee suffictiant to Compleat the plancking—& of 7½ & 8 Inches—You Will bee pleasd to Charge Mes^{rs} Nickals & Hodges with 40¼ lb of Spikes & Give the Ship *Essex* Creddit for them As I have Deleverd them that Amount."

Meanwhile, some of Revere's ardent labors had borne fruit, for on the twentieth of May, amidst editorial accolades and assertions in the press that she was the first copper-bottomed ship built in the United States, the frigate *Boston* was launched at Boston under the eye of President John Adams. "Whole bolts and spikes (drawn from Malleable Copper) have been manufactured in the United States," crowed the *Massachusetts Mercury*. "We think the publick are under obligation to PAUL REVERE, Esq. for his indefatigable attention to this Branch of Naval Architecture, especially at a time when the British Government has prohibited the exportation of that valuable Article."

By late May, the *Essex* was entirely in frame and two-thirds of her bottom had been planked. The launching of the *Boston* meant that the surplus sheathing copper now became available to Waters. On Friday, 24 May, he and Hackett together went on an overnight journey to Boston to survey it. What they saw disappointed them profoundly; there simply wasn't enough—less than 900 sheets. Enos Briggs, summoned before them on Monday morning, returned to Winter Island to measure the hull. He came back with a figure of 9,300 square feet to be sheathed; that sheets four feet long by fourteen inches wide, exclusive of necessary lapping, would require 2,325 sheets—a conservative estimate.

Waters immediately apprised the Secretary of the Navy that the Boston sheathing was not half enough; he would have to arrange for more. Hackett, meanwhile, turned his attention to the reception of the joiners, the first contingent of whom had gone to work on the twenty-second.

Twenty joiners, under the master joiner, Samuel Fowler, and his two assistants, John Martin and Thomas Fowler, were to work on the *Essex* for a total of 1,321 and three-quarters man-days, exclusive of the numerous apprentices under each. Angier McIntire, for instance, later charged not only for himself but for work performed by nine boys. Common laborers received in pay an average of one dollar a day; joiners an average of $1.25; the extra shipwrights employed, $1.50 a day.

On 28 May, Hackett wrote home to Salisbury to urge his son Andrew to hurry on to Salem to bear a hand.

> M^r^ Brigges Schooner is Loading with Plank at Newbury Port, which are much wanted hear, M^r^ Briggs told me this morning that he heard by M^r^ Becket who

came from Newbury, that for want of hands they ware obliged to hall them in with takels if you Can assist, if wanted after this Coms to hand, it will Sarve him & me, as the Plankers have not more that I approve of, than will Last them till night.

I think it would Do well to bring the Wheary with the oars & Sail, She will be handy to run Straight up to the Stoor on the Long [Union] Wharfe for Small articels Meny times & after useless in that bisenes unduttedly (if well fixed up) will Sell well; & if Left at home, I fear will be Spilt.

I wrote you before to Com, & bring the box of Sweeps &c, Dont faill of bringing the box of Sweeps, as I am Cald on to fix Drafts to Go to Congress by the Secretary of the navy—the Committe expects you to Com by all means, by what I have Said on the Subjact, & I would have you not faill of Coming upon any acc^{t} —, I think you^{ll} find it to your advantage, in hast I am y^{r} affecteanate Father. . . .

NB we have about 90 Men employd on the Frigate encluding Carpenders, blacksmiths & Joyners that Calls for my Directions, & through the Goodness of God I Still enjoy a good measure of helth.

the Sooner you Com on, the batter, if the Sch^{r} Should be wind bound, or not ready to Com So Soon as you are readey, Com on by Land in the Stage or any orther way.

I wish to be able to Leve the Ship to Com home for a few Days the Last of Next week, but that is at this time uncerten—

Mess^{rs} Fowler, Marten & Thomas, are well and I beleve finds things agreable.

Abowt 2 Howers Since I wa[i]tted on M^{r} [Elias] Hasket Darby who Came to vue the Frigate, who appeard to be well plesd, I Did not Sho him all I wisht, as his health Did not admit of attending to it at this time, said he would Com again. . . .

Derby was a dying man. In April, his wife had died after a lingering illness; he, too, would follow her to the grave within a matter of months, just weeks before the *Essex* was launched into her native element.

NOTES

The vessel to be built in Newburyport, mentioned by Hackett in his letter to Waters, was to become the sloop of war *Warren.* A letter dated 16 April 1799 from Nicholas Johnson at Newburyport to Hackett at Salem asked him to consult on her design (Salisbury . . . Miscellaneous . . . at the Essex Institute). "if Conveniant Should be glad of Your Assistance in Drafting A Vessel to Carry Eighteen 9 Pounders for A fast Sailer She must not Exceed 360 Tons the Dimensions I wish to Consult you Upon pleas to Right me when you Can be in Town for that Purpose."

Alexander Brodie patented his caboose on 8 December 1780. Its description in the Patent Office, London, is 1271/1780.

The bounty granted by the Legislature

(1788 to expire in 1795) on flax helped to start up several sailcloth, or duck, manufactories, including those at Boston and Salem. In early January 1790, a subscription was circulated around Salem for the construction of a building financed by fifty shares of $100 each. The Town offered a parcel of land adjoining the old almshouse on Pickering's Hill on a fifty year lease at sixpence rent per year. The subscription paper was immediately filled. During the next few months, advertisements appeared in the *Salem Gazette.* At the end of January it had been made known that members of the Duck Manufactory committee would be available every day from 10 to 1 at the Social Hall in Main (Essex) Street to receive proposals from the contractors who wished to bid on the construction. The frame of the building was raised on 27 March. An advertisement for flax appeared shortly thereafter, which, together with pieces aimed at encouraging local farmers to raise flax and giving them hints about how to do it, continued for a number of weeks.

"This day," the Reverend Bentley remarked on 17 July 1790, "the Duck Manufactory began their first piece of Duck. They have been long spinning, but a full supply of flax is not to be obtained." Within a few months, he visited the factory again. "It has now at work about 12 spinners, & 4 weavers. They intend to add to this number. I am convinced that 24 spindles will be too much for one band & wheel, when all are at work, from the trifling courses which move & then set at rest the idle spindles in the present working of the machine. . . ." Further information concerning the Salem Duck Manufactory is to be found in Felt's *Annals of Salem* (Salem, 1849), II, 168; Bentley's *Diary* (Salem, 1905), I, 135, 149f, 156, 158, 186, 202, 350; and the *Salem Gazette* for 1790, particularly the issues of 26 January, 30 March, 6, 13, and 27 April, 4, 18, and 25 May, and 17 August.

Rust's operation of the factory at the time the *Essex* was under construction must be assumed from his bill in The *Essex* Papers and from his ledger in the Essex Institute. He died aboard the *George Washington* in 1804. His other twine factory was located in New County Street, between Court and Ash Streets.

Numerous references to the Salem Iron Factory are to be found in Bentley's *Diary*, volume II, 208, 215, 217, 218, 236, and 238, which includes descriptions of the machinery and its operation. Nathan Read's papers, including many sketches and descriptions of his inventions, are at the Essex Institute, as are the Salem Iron Factory Company papers, on loan from the Peabody Museum. An article about the business appeared in the Essex Institute *Historical Collections*, LIV (1918), 97–114.

Messrs. Nichols & Hodges' agreement with Paul Revere is in The Revere Family Papers, 1746–1799, at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Dated 4 May 1799, it reads: "Sir I am in want of about 200^{lb} of Copper Spikes from 6 to 6½ Inches long, & the Rudder Braces & Pintles, & perhaps some other Castwork for a vessel of about 160 Tunes—Would Request the favour that you will be pleased to inform me if you can supply me with the above, & what will be your lowest price for the same, your answer by the return of the bearer on Monday will much Oblige Sir your Most Hbl Servent . . . P.S. Should you find it conveniant to Supply me, a part of the Spikes will be wanted the latter part of Next week." Revere's answer is noted at the end: "I will supply you provided you do not want many of the Spikes this week, lett me know how many you can do with at first & when you must have the remainder I will give you a decided answer, my price for Spikes is 50 Cents for Spikes & 39 for Rudder braces & pintles."

Waters' letters to Revere on 16 and 31 May are in The Revere Family Papers, 1746–1799, at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

CHAPTER 7

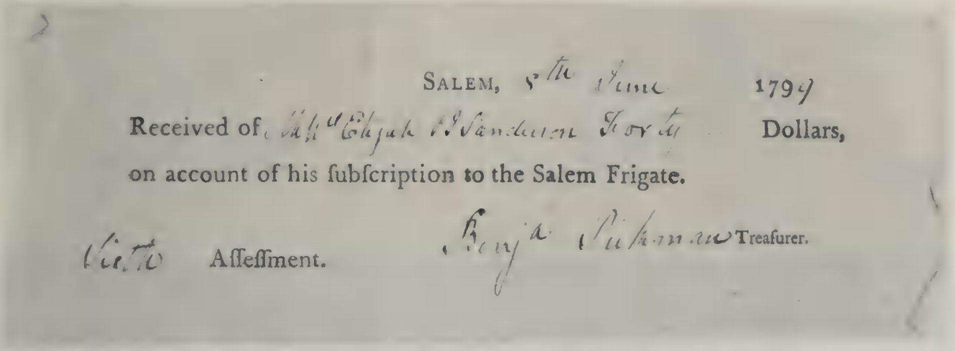
June-July 1799

ONE area of procurement, which had arisen months before, was the matter of ordnance—shot and cannon—each concluded by separate agreements. Acquisition of the gunpowder and small arms was of no particular importance until somewhat later.

The man with whom Joseph Waters dealt for supplies of shot was unquestionably the most enigmatic of all the assorted personalities who came under his scrutiny. He was also to become the most maddening. If there was a "villain" in the history of the building and equipping of the *Essex*, that role must be given to Benjamin Seymour of Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Seymour's personal background, of which Waters had only the slightest knowledge, had been quite extraordinary during the previous decade. Born in England, Seymour had interested himself in the mechanics of rope making and had perfected an innovative rope making engine operated by horsepower. At the end of 1787, he had sailed from England to Russia where the Russian admiralty hired him to construct a full-scale engine, the model of which he had carried with him for the purpose of demonstration, and within ten days of his arrival had been granted £1,000 to direct the workmen building it. After nearly three years of Russian vicissitudes, he returned to London, having attempted en route to interest the Danish admiralty in his invention. In England, he traveled from dockyard to dockyard singing the praises of his apparatus, with mixed success. Eventually, in 1793, he set sail for America, where he worked his way up the coast from Charleston, South Carolina, to Boston, there to be employed by John Codman to build one of his engines, which was afterwards destroyed when the ropewalk burned flat twenty-four hours after the machine had been completed.

During the summer of 1794, Seymour went along to nearby Plymouth to investigate a slitting mill belonging to Martin Brimmer of Boston, having been told by Brimmer that he wished him to take charge of the works, manufacture tin plate, and take half the profits. After another three years of working in association with Brimmer, he decided to become an American citizen and was naturalized, his wife having joined him from England in the meantime. That same year, 1797, he obtained a patent for an improved method of



Salem, 5th June 1799

Received of Messrs Elijah & J Sanderson Forty Dollars,

on account of his ſubſcription to the Salem Frigate.

Sixth Aſſeſſment. Benja Pickman Treaſurer.

Fig. 32. A typical receipt for payment of an installment of the frigate subscription. This one was for Elijah and Jacob Sanderson, Salem cabinetmakers. Jacob Sanderson supplied the furniture for the captain's cabin of the *Essex*.

casting iron rolls for slitting and rolling mills, providing, among others, several for Nathan Read's iron manufactory in Danvers. Part of the water privilege on Town Brook, Plymouth, was procured and buildings, forge, and furnaces were built for the production of various iron implements and hardware.

Seymour's inventive restlessness caused him in 1798 to begin making iron molds for the purpose of casting cannon balls and shot, an enterprise which was to occupy him for a number of years. During the remainder of an uncommon life, he helped to sound the harbor at Newport, Rhode Island, in order to determine the best location for a drydock and Navy Yard, he continued to supply shot and castings for iron pieces, and he made sheaves of his own patented design. In March 1817, he learned he had been appointed Superintendent of the Washington Navy Yard but died in the act of handing his letter of acceptance to the driver of the Plymouth mail stage.

As soon as the New England frigates took shape under the Congressional Acts of 1798, Seymour began to sell their agents on the desirability of contracting for shot made from his molds. He had written to Benjamin Hodges of the Salem Frigate Committee as early as 28 October 1798, a record of sorts inasmuch as only five days had elapsed since the decision had been made to build the *Essex* at all. Hodges' reply is unrecorded, yet it may be assumed that he told him to reapply at a somewhat more timely moment. His flowery letters with their circumlocutory prose began to bombard Waters shortly after he took over as Navy Agent. They began in a roundabout fashion by discussing the shot he expected to provide for Jacob Sheafe and the *Congress* at Portsmouth.

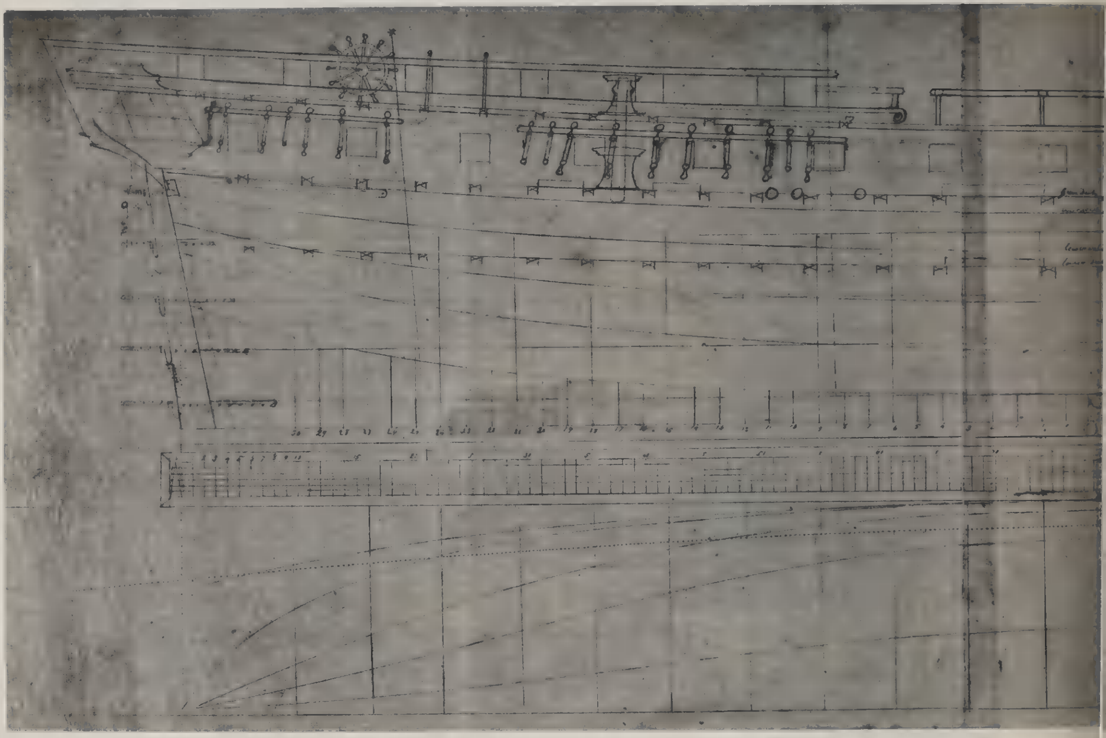
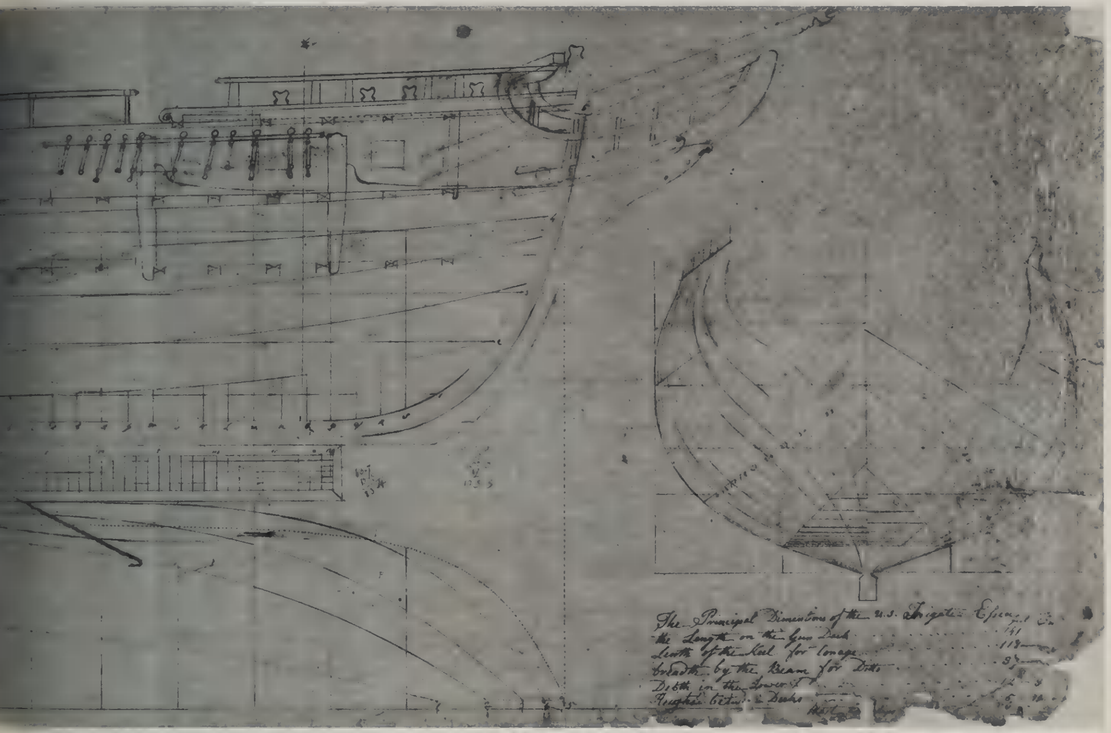


FIG. 33. William Hackett's original draught of the Essex, probably executed


The Principal Dimensions of the U.S. Frigate Essex feet In
the Length on the Gun Deck 141
Lenth of the Keel for Tonage 118
breadth by the Beam for Ditto 37
Depth in the Lower 12 3
Height between Decks 5 10

after the end of May 1799 at the request of the Secretary of the Navy.

About sunset on the evening of 8 March 1799, Seymour appeared in Salem, took a room at Webb's Tavern, had supper, and wrote out a long memorandum for Waters, which he then delivered to his house.

> You desired when I was here last [he said] that I would leave with you in writing the terms upon which an agreement might be made with M^{r} Jacob Sheafe of Portsmouth, for supplying shot for the Frigate now building there: he is not absolutely sure of the size of her guns 24 pounders or Eighteens, but intends receiving her shot of me; unless the Secretary of the Navy sends her shot forward from Philadelphia. have engaged to supply them as under—

	Doll^{s}	
Round shot delivered in Boston	90	
Double head	D^{o}	Bars 10 Cents exclusive
Grape shot	110	
Bottoms & pins	d^{o}	

> these shot I engage shall be cast in turned iron Molds. should shot be offered at a lower rate, I will readily accede to the reduction, if they are equal in goodness and should any offers be made as low as 75 Doll p^{r} Ton will rather suffer the loss of the expense of Molds than lose the opportunity of supplying them, this is a conclusion which I entrust to your confidence. . . .
>
> PS any orders for shot intended for the Forts will with pleasure give a commission to the gentleman whose recommendation, or influence procures such orders. . . . I take the liberty to observe that shot are cast in iron Molds not turned in a Laith, such shot are not at all superior to shot cast in sand. it is evident that shot sent from Philadelphia are very indifferent; for of the quantity sent for the *Constitution* Frigate in Boston some Tons remain useless in the Navy Yard, being condemned as unfit for service, and refused by her Officers.

Seymour always seemed ready to oblige, and as he had gone straight from Salem to Boston to conclude a contract with the Boston frigate committee, Waters very naturally came to the conclusion that he would be the ideal person to supply shot for the *Essex*. After his next visit to Salem on 25 April, Seymour was sure he would get the work, but, when three weeks passed without further word from Waters, he felt compelled to put forward his services yet again.

> I have not been favored with a line from you since I had the pleasure of seeing you at Salem [he wrote to Waters on 18 May], permit me to request the indulgence of furnishing shot at the lowest offers, which be assured I will do, my Competitors in the shot way are endeavoring to circumvent, and wrest the business from me,

some have recourse to base insinuation, a means unworthy [of] success, or Patronage. no person has any Molds, but myself, and though Goodwin & C^o [his erstwhile partners] attempted to make them, they were obliged to throw them by and cast their shot in sand. as I presume, I was the first applicant, I have some hope of being applied to, when shot are called for.

He promised to supply them, "if called upon," at $73 a ton for the round shot, $93 for the double-headed shot including bars, $93 for iron bottoms, and $100 a ton for grapeshot, considerably less than the terms he had offered Sheafe, or so he claimed.

Virtually convinced, Waters told Stoddert on 28 May that "the Shot for her I Expeckt to Contrack^t for this week." In anticipation of agreeing formally with Waters, Seymour again wrote to him on the twenty-ninth of May.

B Seymour takes the liberty to inform Cap^t Waters that he has contracted to supply the Frigate *Congress* at the following rates.

	Doll	Cents		Dolls		
Viz^t Round Shot	73.	33	Freight added	76	Double head Bars includ^d	93.—
				96	Iron Bottoms	93.—
Gr[ape] & Canni^r				103	Grape & Cannister	100.—

for the performance of which B.S. has given Bond to Jacob Sheafe Esq^r to compleat the Complement in 70 days and deliver them at Portsmouth. the shot (Grape & Cannister excepted) all to be cast in Iron Molds to which prices M^r Sheafe has generously added Three Dollars to pay part of the Freight; as the above rates are prices in Philadelphia; as transmitted by Benj^n Stoddert Esq^r and they come cheaper than the Phil^a Shot at 76.96.96 Doll & 103 at which rates the Contract is made. rather than let the occasion slip, I will furnish them Freight free at the above prices; but am desirous if possible, to get some moderate profit, as the introducer of the method of casting shot in Molds—I have the whole complement of round 12 pound & Six pound shot which the Salem Frigate will require. I must request your pardon for mistakes produced by the hurry in which this was wrote.

Although Waters advised the Secretary of the Navy on 12 June that he had contracted for the shot, the contract itself does not survive in The *Essex* Papers, but a memorandum in Seymour's copperplate hand, dated 29 May and specifying the quantities of shot wanting for the *Essex*, states it was to be delivered within seventy days, or, therefore, about the tenth of August. The first signs that Seymour might be less reliable than his blatant self-confidence had suggested manifested themselves in the letter he sent to Waters on 2 June. He was full of intentions, but little else.

> It was my intention, before I left Boston to have sent forward a bond and agreement; or contract for the cannon shot to be supply'd for the Frigate at Salem: in conformity to your proposition; but was unable to send it, as the gentlemen who would have ratified such an instrument for me (as being my particular friends) were absent from home. I intend being in Boston again in a few days, and if indispensably necessary it shall be forwarded. my bond with M^r^ Jacob Sheafe has been signed and sent forward, and it was my intention to have delivered immediately all the round shot for your ship, and deposited them as security for forwarding the Grape & Double head which I intend sending by the same vessell for the two Frigates and deliver yours, before I deliver M^r^ Sheafe's; this method of forwarding the shot for both Ships by one conveyance, will in great measure render my bond with M^r^ Sheafe equal as to its effect with both. the first vessel for Salem will in all probability deliver your round shot.

The "first vessel for Salem," rather than arriving within a few days or, at most, several weeks later, delivered the round shot just over two months afterwards, on 9 August, only barely meeting the seventy-day period specified in the memorandum. Nor was delivery complete, as promised. "You shall receive," Seymour would assure Waters in early August, "the Double head, Grape & bottoms in a few days." The "few days" were to stretch to better than four and a half months, by which time Seymour had caused Waters near fits of apoplexy and was seriously threatening departure of the *Essex* from Salem as ordered.

Procurement of the cannon, on the other hand, was relatively easy. Waters had hoped to buy some of them in Salem; as for the others, he had made inquiries in Boston about having them cast at the Hope Furnace in Providence, Rhode Island. Head & Amory had investigated for him.

> The Owners of the Hope Furnace will make the guns for the Salem frigate agreeably to patterns, at One hundred & forty dollars p. ton, to be proved in the usual manner vizt first with eight pounds of powder two Shott & two good oacum wads, & second with four pounds of powder, two shott & wads, the powder to be furnished by the purchaser, & the shot by the proprietor of the furnace—these terms are lower then we have yet disposed of any cannon.

Stoddert, however, had other ideas. "It was always intended," he instructed Waters on 5 June, "that the Guns for the *Essex* should be sent from hence [Philadelphia]. I perceive you are about contracting for them—If you have contracted for them, & can get good guns, it will be very well,—but if you have not contracted for them, do not do it, but let me hear from you immediately and they shall be sent from hence; as we have very good guns on hand . . . [P.S.] Let me know precisely the number of guns the *Essex* is calculated to carry."

"I have Not Contrackted for the *Essex*^s Guns but should have Done itt if thea Whear to be Obtaind hear," Waters answered him on the twelfth, "As I Soposd from the List furnishd me, that the Goverment had not Any on hand—& I have Only Just Receved proposals from the Furniss What thea will make them for . . . the Shot I have Contrackted for—the *Essex* Sir is Calkulated for 26–12 p^r & 10–6 p^r & will be Compleatly Planckt by tomorrow Night. . . ."

Because the lines of communication between Stoddert's office in Philadelphia and the Navy Agents in New England depended upon the relatively slow instruments of the post riders and mail stages, it frequently happened that efforts were duplicated at each end. Considerable confusion attended the acquisition of the guns as a result. On 18 June, John C. Jones, chairman of the Boston frigate committee, offered Waters a shipment of cannon procured for the *Boston* but no longer needed.

> The Comēē, who build the Frigate here, having been informed there was a Sett of excellent Ship's Cannon, of 12 Inch Calibre, to be purchased at Halifax, as they expected to have occasion for one pair of such, for the Frigate *Boston*, they immediately sent orders to have the sett purchased if to be done at 20s Ster[lin]g p Cwt (the Cost in England) . . . they have just rec^d advise of their being purchased on these terms & may be expected here, in the course of a few days—in the mean time they have supplied the Frigate work all the Cannon wanted—and have therefore directed me, to offer them to the Comēē at Salem, on the terms they are purchased at—they are, 7 feet in length, from the thick of the Breech & are to be Woolwich proof—you will please to let me know immediately, whether the Comēē will take them, as otherwise, they are to be delivered to the order of the Secretary of the Navy.

A day later, sitting over three hundred miles away, Stoddert set in motion plans of his own. Either Messrs. Lane & Salter or Henry Foxall & Company, whoever had a sufficient quantity on hand, was to deliver to Robert Gill, Storekeeper of the Navy, eighteen twelve-pounders for transmission to Salem. Eight more twelves, completing the twenty-six required for the *Essex*, plus the requisite ten six-pounders were to be sent along to Salem by Messrs. Stephen Higginson & Company, the Navy Agents in Boston.

"You will receive enclosed," he wrote to Waters at the same time, "the dimensions of some 12 pounders cast here, Eighteen of which will be sent to you as soon as possible, and I have directed Mess^{rs} Stephen Higginson & C^{o} to send you Eight 12 pounders and 10 six pounders out of a parcel he has received from London on account of the public, the former are 7½ feet and the latter 5½ feet in length—They can give you more particular dimensions."

To further complicate the understanding of these proceedings, Paul Revere, who had not been heard from for some little time, informed Waters in a letter of 22 June "that there are for Sale here twelve, twelve pound Cannon English Guns [which] came out of a Brittish Frigate that was lost some time ago in the Gulf of S^{t} Lawrence . . . I promised the Owners to write you. If you think you may want them you had better come immediately & see about them." Waters did, in fact, go to Boston on 3 July, but unless the guns mentioned by Revere were, in fact, the Halifax guns, they were not obtained.

Without reciting in full the content of the spate of letters written back and forth between Salem and Boston during the next few weeks or that dispatched to Robert Gill in mid-July to stop shipment of the cannon from Philadelphia, it is enough to say that the guns for the *Essex* ultimately came from the following sources: six twelves and ten sixes from Higginson and

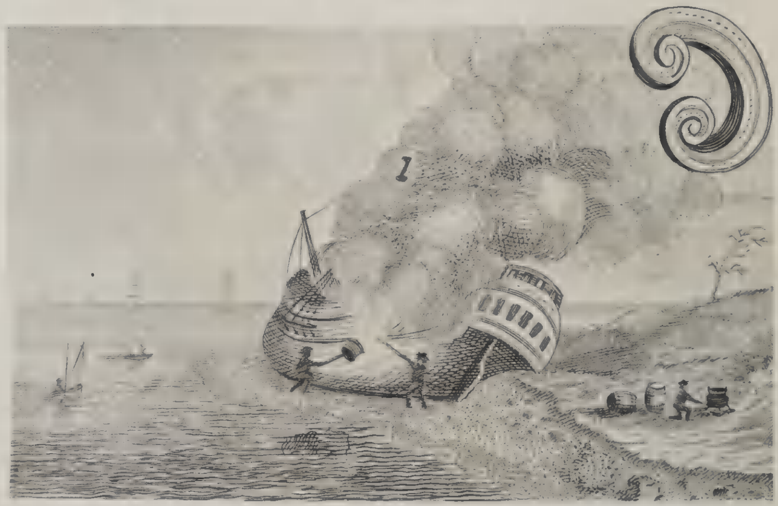


FIG. 34. An uncoppered vessel laid ashore for breaming, that is, for burning off the growths on the hull. From the membership certificate of the Salem Marine Society, 1797.

twenty twelves—the Halifax guns—from the Boston frigate committee. All were of English manufacture. Two additional twelves, sent by mistake due to the general confusion, were returned to Higginson by the Secretary's order. On or about 13 July, the thirty-six guns arrived in Salem aboard the sloop *Lydia*, Aaron Purbeck, master, and were landed at Nichols & Hodges' store on Union Wharf where they remained while the laborers at Winter Island constructed platforms to raise them off the ground.

Arrangements to secure shot and cannon notwithstanding, equally pressing matters had not been neglected since the beginning of June. For one thing, Waters had gone to Boston to contract with Revere for a ton of copper butt bolts and for casting the rudder braces and pintles, although patterns for the latter could not be immediately supplied because Hackett had gone off home to Salisbury for a few days' rest. They could not be completed without his approval. Then, on the fifth, Edward Russell, commanding a coaster frequently employed to freight goods to and from Boston, dropped anchor in Salem Harbor, the patent caboose lashed on his deck, the armorer's forge, four casks of copper sheathing nails, and twelve boxes of the sheathing copper previously intended for the frigate *Boston* in the hold. The sheathing, exactly 897 sheets in the twelve cases, each containing seventy to eighty-five sheets, weighed 7,773 pounds.

In light of Enos Briggs' earlier estimate of the total number required, there were now lacking 1,428 sheets. These had been ordered up by Stoddert from reserves held by the Navy Agents in New York, Messrs. James and Ebenezer Watson.

> By the Sloop *Franklin*, Capt [Benjamin] Hallet, [the Watsons informed Waters on 17 June] we have sent you, by direction of the Secretary of the Navy, 16 boxes, containing 1425 sheets [actually 1,515, due to an accounting error] of 26 oz sheathing copper, and two casks, contain'g 152,000 sheathing nails, an inch and three eighths long. The order was for nails of an inch and a half in length: but as we had none of that length in hand and they could not readily be procured, and as those which we have sent are considerable stouter than nails of this length are usually made, we have thought it expedient to send them; and the more especially as they will probably be wanted 'ere long in your part of the country for some of the public ships. We shall inform the Secretary of the Navy of this proceeding by this day's mail, and follow his directions in the business. We inclose herein the bill of lading. The *Franklin* sails tomorrow.
>
> On board the same sloop we have shipt for Mr Nicholas Johnson of Newbury

port, some copper bolts, nails, and sheathing copper, of which a bill of lading is also inclosed, to be delivered either at Salem or Newbury port, at the option of the Captain.—If he should conclude to deliver them at the latter place, we request the favor of you to forward to M^r^ Johnson the bill of lading of them; but if he should deliver them at your port, we will thank you to receive them, and forward them to him as speedily as possible. The freight & other expences, you will of course charge to the Government. . . .

Again, as a consequence of the communications lag between Salem, New York, and Philadelphia, the nails were no longer needed because of the ample supply already received from Boston. They were forwarded on to Stephen Higginson & Company, orders from Stoddert to cancel their shipment reaching the Watsons after the *Franklin* had sailed.

By the time the entire complement of sheathing had arrived, the *Essex* was in a state of great forwardness. Her orlop deck was complete, the gun-deck beams were fitted, the waist had been all planked up, and a gang of caulkers was already hard at work on the bottom seams. Waters was predicting she would be ready to receive the sheathing within twenty days, or about the middle of August. "The bisiness I am ingaged in, Gos on fast," Hackett wrote in high spirits to his wife, "& in the main, to my Satisfaction, I hope in time to See its Compleated, in a good measure to the Sattisfaction of the Publick."

During the same period, Waters began to receive shipments of kentledge —shaped pigs of cast-iron ballast—from the Storekeeper of the Navy in Philadelphia. Infinitely preferable to the equivalent weight of shingle, or beach stone ballast, kentledge was stowed compactly along each side the keelson and usurped less space otherwise required for stores of drinking water and provisions.

Word had been passed to ship one hundred tons of kentledge to Salem as early as mid-May. The first consignment of 381 pieces, weighing 33.59 tons, left Philadelphia aboard the schooner *Edward*, Captain Eleazer Keazer, on the seventh of June and arrived at Salem about ten days later, when it was piled upon Elias Hasket Derby's leased wharf on Winter Island. A second shipment of 322 pieces of kentledge and twenty-five tons of scrap pig iron, together weighing 56.77 tons, the latter having been sent because "there is no Kentledge at present in Store," left Philadelphia on or about 22 June aboard the schooner *Polly*, Captain Barsillai Eldridge. The remaining ninety-

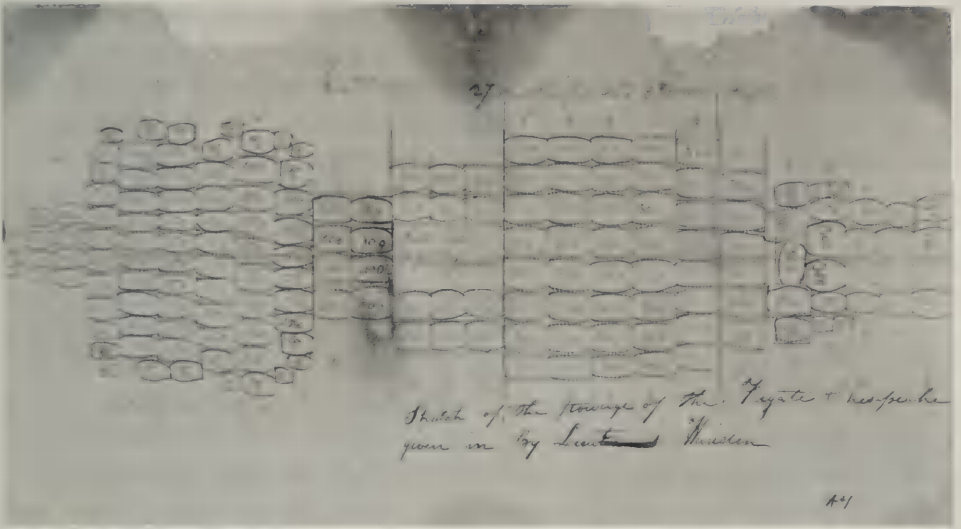

27
Sketch of the stowage of the Frigate Chesapeake
given in by Lieut Winslow
A41

FIG. 35. A sketch showing the stowage of kentledge aboard the U. S. frigate *Chesapeake*, 1807, from the Josiah Fox Papers.

eight pieces, of 9.64 tons, completing the hundred, followed along on the tenth of July aboard the schooner *Three Friends*, Captain David Darling, and, like the rest, was piled against need on Winter Island Wharf.

Subsequent calculations suggested, however, that 100 tons would be insufficient; therefore, before the *Essex* put to sea, the amount would be increased by another 330 pieces totaling thirty-four tons, supplied by Jacob Sheafe—in partial return for the casting of an iron tiller for the *Congress* at the Salem Iron Factory—and sixty-five tons of ordinary shingle ballast obtained locally.

Three principal contracts were concluded during the months of June and July: one with coopers in neighboring Beverly for water casks on 5 June—the text of which is deferred to Chapter 10—one with the riggers, and one with the headsetters.

The rigging for the *Essex* was worked up by McClennan & Sanders, Gibson's Lane, Boston, as a result of a formal agreement signed by Waters at Boston on the eighth of July.

Memarandon of an agreement made and concluded between William McClennan & John Saunders of Boston Riggers—On the one part, and Joseph Waters of Salem (in behalf of The Committe for building the Frigate now constructing in

Salem) On the outher part. Witnesseth, that for and in consideration of the Sum hearafter mentioned, the Said M^cClennan and Saunders do agree with the said Waters in the manner Following, Viz^t that they will completely rig the United States Frigate *Essex*, in every part, excepting in such particulares As are hearafter mentiond, and more particularly that they will get in and Step the lower masts & Bowsprit, gammon And rig the bowsprit & bumkins, rig the Jib boom & Flying Jib boom, with spritsail and spritsail top sail yards across and Compleately rigged for bending Sails, That they will Rigg the fore mast, fore top mast, and fore top gallant mast, with Royal top gallant, topsail, & lower yards across, and completely Rigged for bending Sails with top mast & top gallant steering Sail booms on the yards, and their Rigging Rove with two Runners & tackles on the mast, with lower yards tackles, two top burtons & rolling tackles to the topsail Yard, The top mast with top tackle pendant blocks & falls—the lower Yards to hang with slings & geers—also to rigg the main mast, main top mast & main top Gallant mast with Yards in the Same form & manner as is particularly specefied for the fore Rigging, also to completely Rigg the Mizen mast, Miz[zen] top Mast & mizen top gallant mast, As before particularly mentiond for the other masts, and with Studing sail geer—Gaff Spanker & Ringtail boom with tackles to the lower masts & top mast—And the said M^cClennan & Saunders do agree that the Said Rigging Shall be well & sufficently Stretched, properly wormed parclined [parceled], served and leatherd in a workmanlike manner, and to the satisfaction of the said Waters and the Said M^cClennan & Saunders do Agree that the Said Rigging shall bee ready & fitted for going on the mast heads on or befour the 5^th day of September Next and that the top gallant Yards shall be across & every thing completed for bending Sails on or before the 25^th of October Next—and the Said M^cClennan & Saunders do Agree to Complete the Gun Tackles for Thirty Six Guns—And the Said Joseph Waters doth on his part agree, with the Said M^cClennan & Saunders that the Bowsprit, Masts, Yards & Spars Shall bee deleverd along Side the said Ship free of expence to the Said M^cClennan & Saunders —and that the truckage of the Rigging to the loft & from thence to the Warf Shall bee at the Expence of the Committe And further than in geting in the lower masts the Said Waters will furnish As many laborers to assist in that service—As the Said M^cClennan & Saunders Shall Riggers And the Said Waters doth agree to pay to the Said M^cClennan & Saunders in Consideration of their faithful performance of their Contrackt, and in full of their services the Sum of Fourteen hundred dollars to bee paid them at his option as the work progresses and at the completion of the work to pay them the Balance which may bee them due—on demand—And that no misunderstanding may take place it is understood between the parties that the said M^cClennan & Saunders Are not to fit the necessary Rigging for the Ankors or Cables, As the davids, Fish Tackles Geer Stock tackles: Ankor, deck, bit, dog, or wring Stopers the Luff Tackles, Jigger or Stay tackles, nor fit the Top or boarding Nettings, And to the true & Faithful performance of this Agreement we do hereby bind ourselves in the penal sum of Five hundred Dollars

Sign'd, Seald & deliverd this
8th Day of July 1799 McClennan & Sanders
Joseph Waters

Within two days of the date of this contract, the riggers began their preliminary work in Boston, or so Waters told sparmaker Laighton at Portsmouth in an attempt, perhaps, to spur him on to greater activity. The riggers would not come to Salem, however, for almost another two months.

Before coming back to Laighton and his work on the spars, we must mention briefly the appearance of the headsetters on the scene, for the construction of the ship's head with its compound curvatures of rails, ekeing, and head timbers required the intricate joinery of a specialist in that area of shipbuilding. The Richardsons of Charter Street, Boston, had not only done the work for the frigate *Boston* but were well-known by many ship owners of Salem who, for many years, had employed them on their own vessels. "I Will Come Down to Salem to do your Frigate," John Richardson wrote to Waters on 24 July, "at the Same price ass I Did the Ship *Boston* & all Expences found from the time I Leave Boston till I return to Boston again I can Come Down Next Week." The proposed price was $400 for the whole job or, alternatively, fifteen shillings a day. Waters elected the former, and when the accounts were finally settled he had only to add the expenses of the headsetters' board with Enos Briggs and their lodging elsewhere around town. Richard Richardson and four men came to Salem in the Boston stage to survey the scene and to confer with Briggs during the morning of 30 July; he and one man returned immediately to Boston that afternoon. They began their actual work in mid-August.

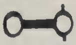
Ever since Hackett and Waters had undertaken a hurried journey to Portsmouth in mid-May, no correspondence with either Luke M. Laighton or Elisha Hill, 3rd—other than an estimate from Hill—seems to have taken place for over a month, when Waters picked it up again as a result of Alden Briggs' request to know the length and size of the topmast fids. "Ye plates in the Tops," he passed the information on from the blacksmith, "Must bee 1 & ¼ Inches wide & 4 inches Long in y Clear to Receve y Futtuck plaits Ye

Mizin plaits 1 Inch Wide & 3¼ Inches in y Clear." At the same time, he inquired about the state of the work on the spars. What progress had been made? Nearly three weeks passed without a reply. Their next letters, each written on the first of July, crossed.

Waters repeated the blacksmith's questions and informed Laighton that he was sending by another conveyance twenty-three bars of iron for Hill's use and two barrels of turpentine with which Laighton could pay the mastwork.

"You will excuse my not answering your letter of June 12th before now," Laighton wrote on his part, "but being so much in a hurrey I neglected it, but now have got my work out of the way, and have began Your Frigate's work."

> I have received part of the Spars with two lower Yards and three pine Topmast, & understand the Mast and the other Spars are in the River, but want a full tide to float them. Therefore [I] expect them every day—the Oak trees for Cheekes was to be dld in all this Month but I expect to go up to the pond w[h]ere the Sticks are cut to see them. other ways fear I shall be disappointed we concluded to pay the work with Turpentine & Oil but thay Use Varnish & Oils for our Frigate which answers extreemley will, & saves the time of Cooling down Turpentine, if it's not convenient to send Varnish, I can procure it here as I want it imediately, to Use. We concluded on the length of the lower Yard & Top sail Yard Arms when you was here which paper I have lost, and if the length here inclosed do not compare with your dimentions, I should be glad of another Coppey—The Blacksmith has wrote for the dimentions of Topmast fids, but thay do not come under my direction according to the custom of Mast makers in this river . . . PS. I suppose the Topmasts fids should be as much as five inchs by four & the length two feet Eight inchs long which is four inchs shorter then from out side to out side of tresseltrees—I shall have the Tops Oak work & Mast work all Under way at once, so if any alterations are to be made from my dimentions I wish to know it immediately.

The iron sent to Elisha Hill, 3rd from Salem had been acquired from Billy Gray and was the only supply available at the time. It proved to be unsuitable. "I have receivd your Iron," Hill told Waters on 9 July, ". . . although it is not quite so suitd as I could wish however I can exchange it for some other so that there will be no difficulty. Sir if it is agreable I wish you to send me the remainder in square bars as it will be most suitable for the work Mr Leighton has spoke concerning the boom Irons & desir'd me to send to know which fashion you would chuse them wether with prongs or with [*torn*]. The ship *Congress* has hers made I beleive without as I shall describe to be made four inches wide the one part four square with nails the other round for the boom with a traveller (or roller) whch will be much less expence & answer the purpose equally as well I beleive Sir I expected to have made the fidds for the topmast as I do the smaller work but as you please Sir If I can receive the remainder of the Iron within a month it will answer the purpose If you cannot purchase it without trouble I beleive I can furnish the same to compleat the work @ Six Doll^s p^r Cwt. Sir please to send me word concerning the Boom Irons as I can now be making of them . . .  Clasp to Secure the uper part with @ 1 Leg—& a Small Chain to it wich Permits the heal of the Boom to be Lifted up."

By 10 July, Waters was urging Laighton along again: the difficulties Laighton was experiencing in obtaining cheek pieces concerned him. "As the Lower Masts & Bowsprit will bee the first Spars that will bee Wanted think You would do Well to Let them bee Finished first—I must urge Your Exertions in Geting the Spars Ready As Soon As posable Pleas to Drop mee a Line by Return of Post. . . ."

> The two Main Yards [Laighton reported on the fifteenth] two fore Yards two fore & Main Top Mast is furnishd, and I expect to complete the Cross Jack & Top sail Yards by the 28th Instant if the Spars prove Good, the Bowsprite and Mast is the Next I shall take in hand, as to the Cheek pieces I have heard nothing of them, Since I wrote to You last I have waited them long thinking every day to heare from them, but on Thursday propose to go affter them myself, I have no doubt but the work will be compleate in good season as I have five hands with me I have received the two barrels of Turpentine sent by M^r [James] Ham, but had bought a barrel of Varnish before . . . PS in Your dimentions the Bowsprite length is 54 feet long but the length without the bowes is not mentioned I wish you would [send me] the length from the out side of the bowes to the bitts or from out side to the head of the bowsprite on Account of laying the bed of it.

A copy of the answer was noted in Hackett's handwriting at the foot of Laighton's original letter: "Bowsprit from the Aft Side of the Bowsprit Bitts to the Four Side of the Stem—16 Feet the Depth from the Top of the Lower Deck to the Chook [for the step] is 12 Feet Depth between Decks 5-10 Inches the Squares to Come within one foot of the Gun Deck."

Correspondence continued every few days. On the eighteenth of July, Waters expressed his pleasure at Laighton's progress. "The *Essex* Progresses fast her Lower Deack is Compleat—& the Gun Deack Beems all in . . . in twenty Days I have no Doubt will bee Ready to Receive the Copper on her Bottom—As the Lower Masts & Bowsprit will bee the first Spars wanting think you would Do will," he repeated to emphasize the point uppermost in his mind, "to have them Ready As Soon as posable—the Bowsprit will bee Wanting befour the Fourcastle Deack is Laid As after that is Laid—the Truble & Expence will bee much more—to Get it in & Secure it—than it will beefour—if thear is Any of Your Costers—that will Under Take to Bring the Spars to Salem—bee pleased to get thear proposals & Inform me of them—I think by the Last of Next month—Wee shall be Ready for the Spars—the Spars must in my Opinon bee Brought on Deck—the Risque of To[w]ing them will bee too Great. . . ."

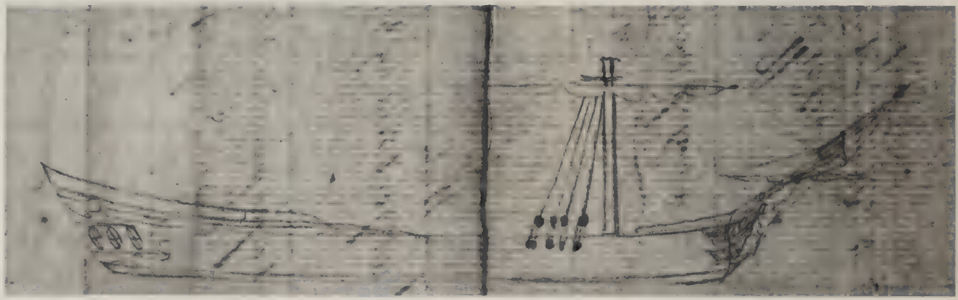


FIG. 36. Sketch of an unidentified vessel which appears on the back of two receipted bills in The *Essex* Papers.

Another communication from Laighton followed the next day. "The Cheek pieces cannot be down untill the last of this Month. I sat out on thirsday to go Up where the trees are, but found the Man in Dover he Sayes I shall have them by the last of the Month by which time I shall endeavour to have the Mast & Bowsprite fitt for the Cheeks,—I have no other work in hand but Yours. I refuse work all most every Day but hope it will be no disadvantge in the end . . . PS I will enquire of the Coasters concerner^{g} the freight of the Spars and let you know, the lower Mast & Bowsprite must be towed up I suppose."

I Am Direckted To Inform You by the Committe for Building the Frigate [Waters replied on 22 July] To Inform You that it is thear wish that You Should Procead, up Whear the Cheek pieces Are or Employ Sume person to go, houm You Can Confide in & not Leve them till they Are a float & in a fair Way—for

> You to have them in time the Expence will Bare no propotion to a Disapointment in the Spars not being Compleated in time.

The frigate, he predicted, with calculated over-optimism, "is in a fair Way of being Lanched by the Last of Next mounth—the Bowsprit we shall Want by the Middel of August & two of the Lower Yards for Shears. . . ."

In the meantime, Elisha Hill, 3rd had never received an answer to his letter of 9 July. Waters finally responded on the twenty-second.

> Respecting the Boom Irons they must bee made with four prongs—& A Neck to turn Supehadlly [separately?] for the Boom to be Sqare with the Yard when out & of a Suteable Thickness—the Inner Iron must bee made with a Clasp in the four part to Admit the Boom to bee Takeing out for to trice [?] the Heal up—& a Small Chain to the Key that Secures the Clasp—the Roller must bee in the outer Iron—Sir if I Should not Get the Iron in time for you I Will Drop you a Line & you may purchas it at your place thear is a Numbr of Our Russha Veasals Expected & Am in hopes Sume of them will bee in Time—the Booms Irons Wont bee fixt on the Yards at portsmouth I presume—Wee Shall want two of the Lower Yards for Shears.

July ended with Waters going off to Portsmouth, more to convince himself that things were actually better than they seemed than to chide Laighton. At Salem, laboring away in the background, the silent and less visible workmen were going about their business. Benjamin Felt, in his shop at the corner of Curtis and Derby Streets, was making the ship's blocks with the help of blacksmith Seth Brooks who was fitting the pins and sheaves. In the Poor House, the mentally deficient and indigent of the town were picking and rolling oakum for the caulkers. Alden Briggs was busy cutting, riveting, and sawing bolts from the strings sent down from Boston by Revere. The carters had been hauling tar and pitch to the shipyard, they had deposited Bower No. 2 on Union Wharf from the iron factory, and were bringing the bolts of sailcloth as they came off the looms at the Duck Manufactory to the sailmakers. Samuel McIntire had started to carve the ship's figurehead, and the ropewalks around the Common had begun production of the cordage for the riggers.

NOTES

Benjamin Seymour's diaries have been published and provide a fascinating glimpse of a most enigmatic character. See Fannie E. Seymour, *Benjamin Seymour in Russia, England and America, 1787–1817* (Plymouth, Massachusetts, 1940). Like many inventive geniuses, he was a poor businessman.

For further information about the rigging of the *Essex*, see the Cordage and Indent sections of the accompanying Appendices.

Elisha Hill, 3rd is listed in the 1834 edition of the Portsmouth *Directory* as a blacksmith at the Portsmouth Navy Yard. He lived on Jaffrey Street, now Court Street. He died in 1853, aet. 76. His wife Phoebe died in 1856, aet. 77. He was descended from the Peter Hill family of York County, Maine. Information from the Josiah Fox Papers indicates that the Hills were involved in the building at Portsmouth of the Dey of Algiers' tribute ship *Crescent*. An Elisha Hill died at Portsmouth on 15 September 1798, aet. 55, of a fever then prevalent; a signer of the Association Test of 1776 "to oppose hostility of British fleet against United American Colonies" and a member of the committee of twelve who planned the reception of George Washington during his visit to the town in 1789. He was a blacksmith, as was Elisha Hill, 3rd.

CHAPTER 8

August-September 1799

ABOUT mid-August, the *Salem Gazette* made passing reference to the *Essex* after months of paying her not the slightest notice. "The work on the Frigate building in this town is pushed with vigour. Connoisseurs say the ship looks well upon the stocks. In three or four weeks we shall see how she sits upon the water." There had been no need to follow her along in print; people could and did keep abreast of the progress on their own, for there was hardly any section of the principal waterfront from which she could not be observed. No doubt the renewed journalistic interest was meant not so much for the edification of the inhabitants of Salem as for that of the outside world, particularly newspapers elsewhere which might pick up the story and reprint it. Salem, perhaps, was just a little sensitive that its own frigate had been among the last to be laid down; more so at the moment than ordinarily because the *Congress*, even though she was not a subscription ship, had just been launched at Portsmouth accompanied by embarrassing editorial fanfare in the New Hampshire press.

On the first of August, the cannon for the *Essex*, which had lain since their delivery on Union Wharf, were removed to Winter Island, an event which, judging from the contemporary interest it generated, seems almost to have taken on the properties of a symbolic act. At the same time, the supply of gunpowder ordered by Stoddert during the middle of July to be sent from New York was being prepared for shipment by Messrs. James and Ebenezer Watson. Ninety-six casks of cannon powder and eight of musket and pistol powder, together weighing 9,880 pounds, arrived aboard the sloop *Franklin*, Captain Benjamin Hallett, on or about the eighth, then were carted overland to the powder house where they were logged in by keeper of the magazine Thorndike Daland.

Within another two or three days, that portion of the shot which Benjamin Seymour had finally managed to scrape together put in a long overdue appearance. Charles Sigourney, Jr., of Boston, who was acting as Seymour's forwarding agent, had informed Waters of its impending arrival.

> By order of M^{r} Benjamin Seymour there have been shipped on board the Sloop *Buck*, Cap: Richardson, Thirteen hundred twelve pound Shot & Six hundred

nines [i.e., sixes], for the use of the Frigate building at Salem, in part of his contract. The double headed & grape shot designed for this purpose, M^r^ S. writes shall be forwarded with all possible expedition. The expence of freight &c. you will please to defray which if stipulated in the contract, can be deducted from the am^o^ of his bill.

Waters had been fortunate to get as much from Seymour as he had. As he would discover during subsequent months, extracting the remainder of the shot from him would be like dragging a Christmas tree through a rathole backwards.

Small arms and military stores, consisting of 100 cutlasses, sixty muskets and bayonets, thirty pairs of pistols, and 100 boarding pikes, had already arrived from Philadelphia in July aboard the schooner *Three Friends* at the same time she had transported one of the consignments of kentledge to Salem. Musket balls had yet to be obtained. These were to be supplied by tinsmith Joseph Newhall—later the *Essex*'s first armorer—with whom a contract was signed on 16 August.

this may Certify that I this Subscriber have this Day Agred with Joseph Waters Navy Ag^t^ to Suply him with wat Muskit & pistol Leaden Bals hee may want for the United States Frigate *Essex* now building in this town—at Nine Cents per pound—the Said Waters Suplying mee with Lead at Six Dollars & twenty Five Cents p^r^ hundred[weight].

Nearly three and a half tons of bar lead was acquired in Boston during the month of August alone and was apportioned out to the three tradesmen who most needed it—Newhall for his musket balls, William Luscomb for plumbing work and the manufacture of paints, and John Howe of Boston for a head pump. Small quantities of sheet lead, with which to line the scuppers and the wheel rope holes, were reserved for future use.

Copper bolts for structural fastenings had been supplied by Paul Revere for a number of weeks, and he had also been lately occupied with casting the rudder braces and pintles. Waters, having heard almost nothing from him since the latter part of June, inquired on the second of August if he could not speed up the delivery of the bolts.

Revere replied the following day. "Yesterday I was so engaged in Casting braces & pintles that I did not see yours till twas too late to answer it. I shall this day put on board Russel 313^lb^ bolts in 19 Strings the remainder under way I shall pay every attention I hope to have the Rest compleated in all next Week. Your braces & pintles are about 2 thirds of them Cast I will compleat the whole as soon as it is in my power." Overly optimistic, he was forced to apologize to Waters over a fortnight later for unforeseen delays. "I have been Severely Mortifyed to think It has not been in my power to send your bolts in time. I have been Ill used by the man who draws my pigs into Barrs, he kept them near a week longer than he ought, but that dificulty is now got over, I have now got our works fitted, & have got my large hammer. I send you 121^{lb} & will send double that quantity tomorrow provided you wish them to go by the Stage. By Friday your braces will be done & I will [send] them by the first Vessel that goes, after that time. You may Calculate on 200^{lb} or more of Bolts till you git the whole."

No more were needed as of 3 September, when Hackett sent a memo to Waters. "The Copper bolts are al Drove & there is a few Left," he told him, "would it not be will to acquaint Col^{o} Revear we want no more. . . ?"

Stagemen Badger & Blake transported the rudder braces to Salem on 22 August; they were turned over to Alden Briggs to be cut, shaped, and fitted. At the same time, Waters placed an order with Revere for a ringbolt for the rudder.

> We shall want a Ring Bolt for the Rudder of the following Dimensions—Two feet seven inches long. Diameter one & a quarter inches, with two Rings in the same, wish you to get it down, as soon as possible, & send it, by the first opportunity.

Revere's final order for the *Essex*, aside from a chain with a silvered point—the ship's lightning rod—came in September. "You'll please to have Cast immediately Eleven Composition Rollers agreeable to the Pattern the Bearer hereof will deliver you, & send them down by the Stage as soon as compleated." These were the rollers to be placed on a vertical axis at regular intervals along the tiller sweep below decks to serve as bearings for the steering ropes. They were delivered to Salem on 17 September, filed to fit by Alden Briggs, and installed aboard just before the *Essex* was launched.

The ship's remaining copperwork was mostly of local manufacture, consisting primarily of hardware and fittings as, for example, sheaves and cogs for the blocks, "Casting 4 Copper Chambers Wt 305 lb," rings and staples for scuttles, dogs for the pumps, sheet copper for sealing the magazine, light, and filling rooms, miscellaneous galley utensils, and an assortment of tools required by the gunner for handling the gunpowder. Most are listed in the Indents, reproduced in the Appendices.

By the middle of August, the *Essex* herself was in a fair state of completion. Structurally, she was complete. The hull had been planked and caulked. Eleven hundred sheets of thick brown sheathing paper had been freighted to Salem by John Webb Checkley for Simon Elliot, paper and snuff manufacturer at 51 State Street, Boston. Sheathing had begun soon after 9 August when the first shipment of 200 sheets of the sheathing paper became available for application under the copper. Deck planking had been laid except on the forecastle deck. Here, work had come to a complete standstill, because the bowsprit had failed to arrive from Portsmouth on schedule.

The fault lay not with Laighton, who had finished his work on it before the end of the first week of August, but with Captain James Ham, skipper of a coasting vessel, with whom Waters had reached an agreement while he had been at Portsmouth on 28 July. Laighton reported to Waters on Monday, 12 August, but went into considerably greater detail about his continuing quest for cheek-piece timber than about the errant bowsprit. "It was concluded on when you was in Portsmouth," he said,

> that my Father or I should go on affter the cheek pieces for the Mast, but it has hapned so that he could not attend to it, nor to makeing the bowsprite, therefore I was oblidged to furnish the bowsprite first before I could go, which was done at the time we sat, and hooped the next day ready for M^r^ Ham to take on board, he sent me word he wo'd take it on Thursday with the Yards. Therefor I could do no more to forward the business, but sat out for Wenepusoque Pond [Lake Winnipesaukee, New Hampshire] in hopes to meet the pieces, but being disappointed I proceeded on & Cross'd the pond for Turftenborough [Tuftonboro] upwards of fifty miles from Portsmouth, There I found the man that I agreed with for the pieces, he had been three days himself & two hands to find the trees suitable but had got but one of the large sticks. We were two days more before we found the large stick. We cut five trees that was ansurable to our dimentions but all prov'd rotten before we found one that would answer, the sticks was hauled in the pond on fryday affternoon when I sat out for home, thay are to be acrosst the pond on Saturday night, and Monday the teemes are to take them on for Dover which is 30 Miles by Saturday I expect them, in that time I shall be makeing the Oak work for the mast & shall do my endeavour to gitt the Mast ready for the cheeks.

There was bad news, as well. Hill, the blacksmith, had had an accident.

"M^r Hill has jammed two of his fingers so much that I expect he wont be able to work this three weeks. he could not hoop the bowsprite himself, so his clumsey Journey man has brused it considrable." Captain James Ham, furthermore, despite his promise to take the bowsprit aboard his sloop, did not do so until almost the end of the month. His inexplicable procrastination is still a mystery. "I thought," wrote Waters to Laighton, "When I Was in Portsmouth, that I should Not have been Disappointed in Capt Ham As hee Agreed & promast that whin the Spars Whare Ready hee would Take them in, Your not Giving Any Reasons puts mee in the Dark About them—& not Saying Any thing Respecting of thear being on board—or a Takeing in—if Cap^t ham has not Takeing them on board, pleas to Drop mee a Line Ameadatly."

From the lack of evidence to the contrary, it seems likely that Waters learned nothing more from Portsmouth during the next few days. On 22 August, he was obliged to undertake the tedious journey thence yet again. Ham's sloop, with the bowsprit and the two yards needed for sheers to step the bowsprit, finally entered Salem Harbor on 28 August.

By this time, the headsetters had arrived in force from Boston and had been at work for about ten days. Timber for the head had been selected from a timber dock in Boston by Waters himself on the third of July when he had been in town on business about the ship's cannon. Enos Briggs and his men had then prepared it for Richardson's arrival. As extras not covered by the contract price, Briggs' bills to the Committee survive.

245 ft thick Plank Deliverd Mr Richardson for the Head & Gallerys $80	19.60
3 knees for Cheeks for the Head i had of Sam^l Simons 12 Doll	36.00
7 tons 22 feet timber for the Head Deliverd Richardson 7 Dolls	52.83
2 tons 34 ft Pine timber to D^o 5 Dol	14.25
2 knees 12 feet	2.50
18 ft timber	3.17
14½ Days Sawing of the Stuff for the Ships head & Stern work by 2 men 16/	29.68
head rails got out for d^o	4.00
haulling timber & Carting Carve work and Blocks for the Ship	2.00

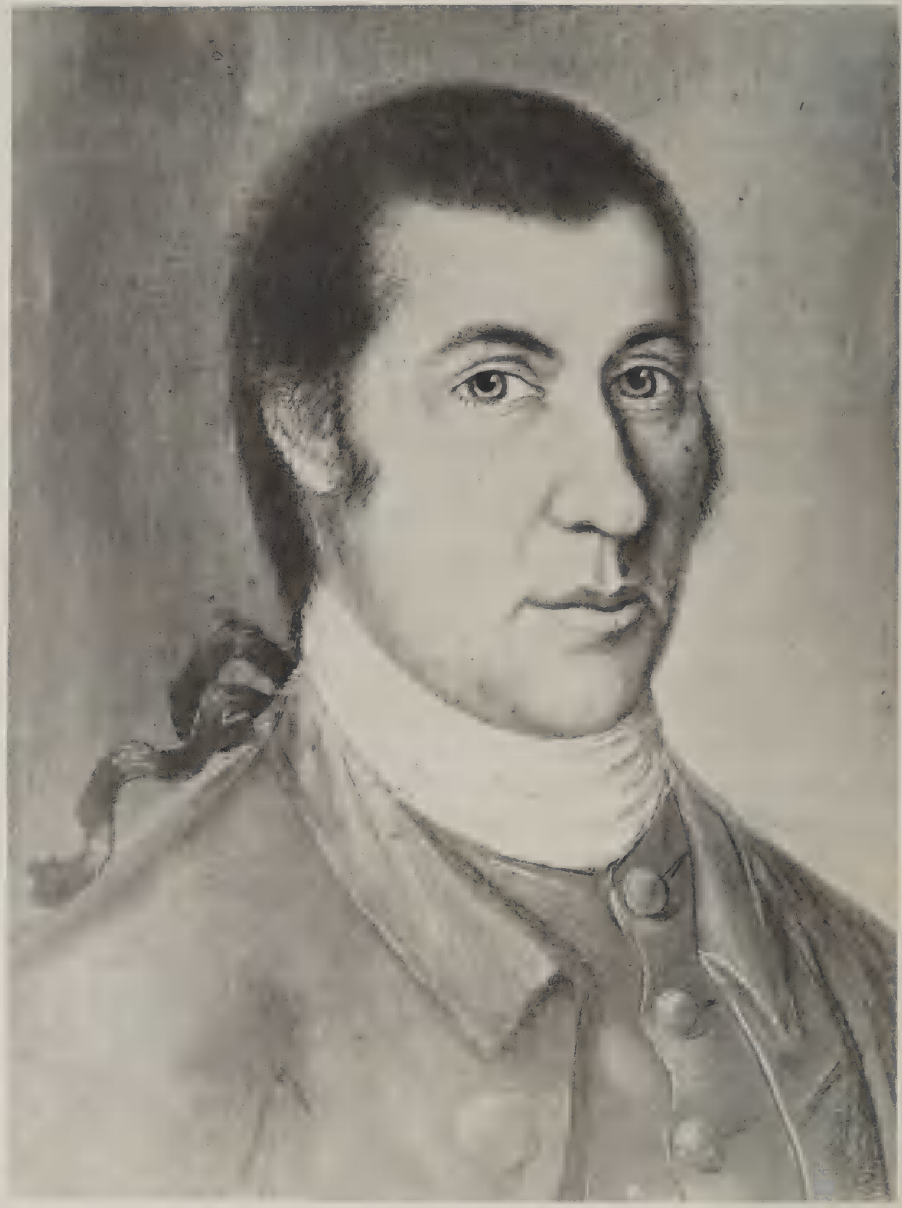


Fig. 37. Samuel McIntire (1757–1811), Salem architect and woodcarver, who executed the carvings of the *Essex*. From a pastel by Benjamin Blyth.

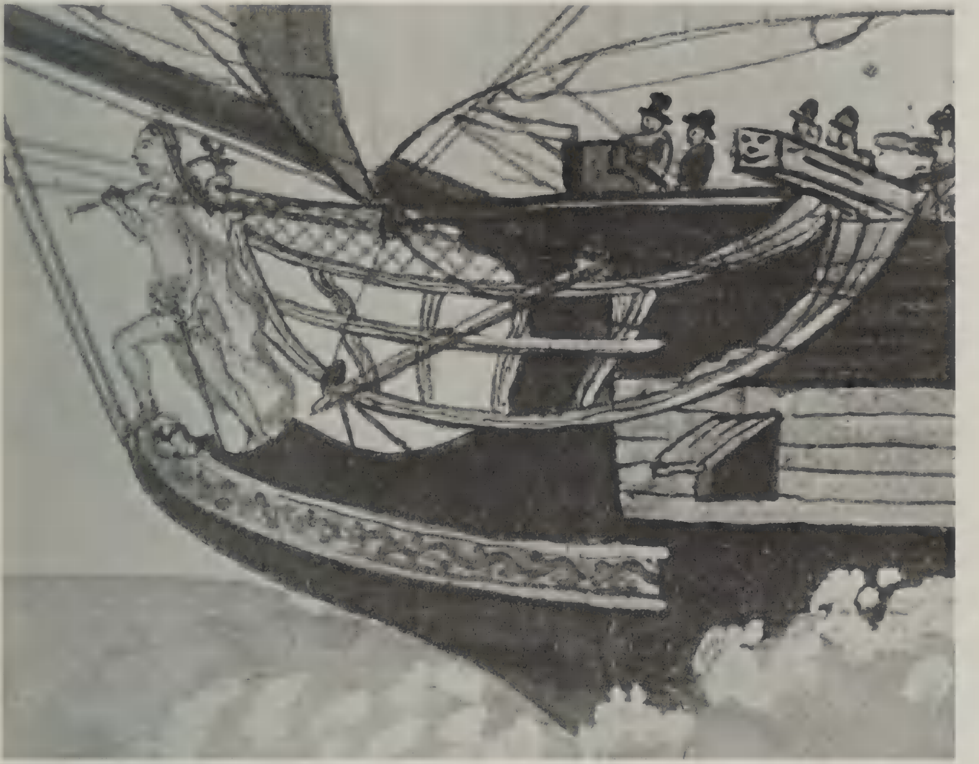


FIG. 38. An enlargement of the figurehead, trailboards, and cathead face from Joseph Howard's watercolor of the *Essex*.

The carved work for the *Essex* was designed and executed by Salem's famous architect-woodcarver Samuel McIntire, many of whose houses and public buildings still grace the older sections of Salem and give it the flavor for which it has become famous. Although examples of his architectural decorative carving are numerous, comparable examples of his ship carvings are personified in a single piece, a small figurehead in the Peabody Museum, attributed to him by virtue of its having been obtained at the auction sale of his estate. From the simple beginnings of undertaking ornate joinery work aboard local vessels, he gradually progressed from fancy cabin moldings and scrolls to trailboards, stern and quarter gallery embellishments, and figureheads themselves. By the time the *Essex* was built, his services were in much demand by local ship owners.

The carving for the *Essex* cost $410. The extent of McIntire's work is unfortunately nowhere specified—his laconic bill reading simply, "To Carving

Work for said Frigate"—but in all probability it included the figurehead, trailboards, quarter gallery trim, stern decorations, and the cathead faces. The figurehead was hauled to Winter Island from McIntire's shop by carter Joshua French on Thursday, 8 August.

Joseph Howard's watercolor portrait of the *Essex* depicts the figurehead as an American Indian. It suggests one feather thrust up at the back of long black hair and a costume consisting of what seems to be spotted red and green trunks—a girdle of leaves and flowers, perhaps—a double-strand necklace, and a long white cloak with wide light-green border trailing from behind the shoulders. The right arm is bent at the elbow; the hand holds a tomahawk which rests over the right shoulder. The left arm extends rigidly down alongside the body while the hand clutches a staff, pointing down at the port trailboard. The left leg is placed forward with the foot firmly planted on the forward end of the trailboards where there is a small scroll shaped like an inverted billethead.

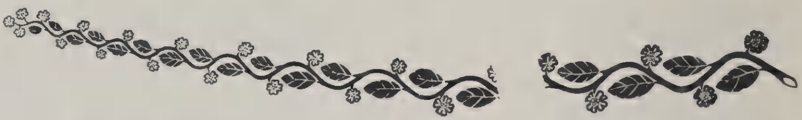


FIG. 39. An interpretation of the "*Flora nonspecificus*" on the trailboards of the *Essex*, based on the Joseph Howard watercolor.

The trailboards describe a soft curve downward from just above and abaft the bobstay holes in the knee of the head to the flair of the bows and aft to the hawse holes. The design can no longer be seen distinctly in the Howard watercolor, yet gives the impression of garlands of leaves and flowers, aptly described by one student of the subject as *Flora nonspecificus*. The background color is an ochre orange, the "garlands" a yellow-green, and the blossoms a brilliant red. The cheek knees and moldings are either white or pale yellow.

The quarter gallery is depicted as black with white trim. The designs shown in the enlargement illustrated here are largely self-explanatory, except, perhaps, for the amorphous shape at the drop. This could be intended to represent an eagle with wings outstretched, a familiar McIntire motif which he sometimes used in mantle carvings and also in full relief for the eagle that surmounted the doorway of Salem's 1805 Custom House.

Nothing is known about the stern decoration, because it is nowhere described and is not shown in the Howard painting. Many of McIntire's archi-

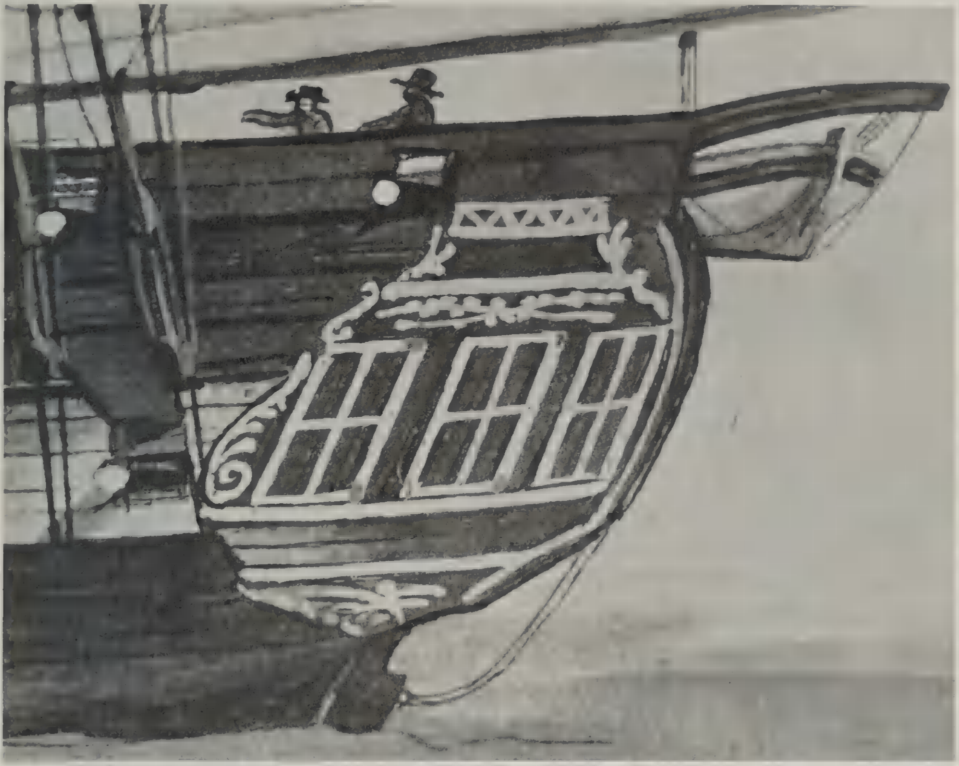


FIG. 40. A close-up view of the port quarter gallery of the *Essex*, showing the amorphous shape at the drop, believed to represent an eagle with outstretched wings.

tectural plans and drawings survive in the Essex Institute, Salem. Among them are a handful of his sketches for ship carvings, several of which are illustrated here, but none can be identified or in any way be connected with any specific vessel, let alone the *Essex*.

The cathead faces are more difficult to assess. The painting definitely shows a grinning face on the end of the port cathead, yet whether intended to represent the face of a cat or of a lion, as was common, it nonetheless seems to have been carved in low relief, not in the round.

The painting of these carvings, as well as of the ship herself, was the job of William Luscomb, an inhabitant of Norman Street adjacent to the old region of "Knocker's Hollow." By trade, he was a painter, glazier, and plumber for houses as well as for ships and was one of the busiest men in Salem. He began setting squares of glass in the quarter galleries and stern windows about the last of August; he later glazed the skylight in the quarter-

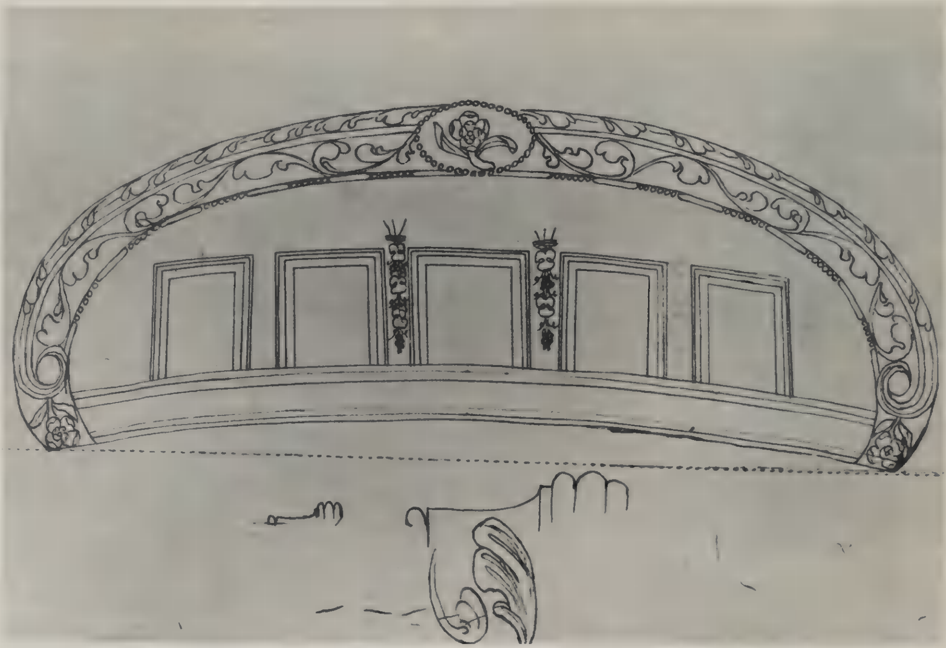


FIG. 41. A stern carving design by Samuel McIntire for an unidentified vessel.

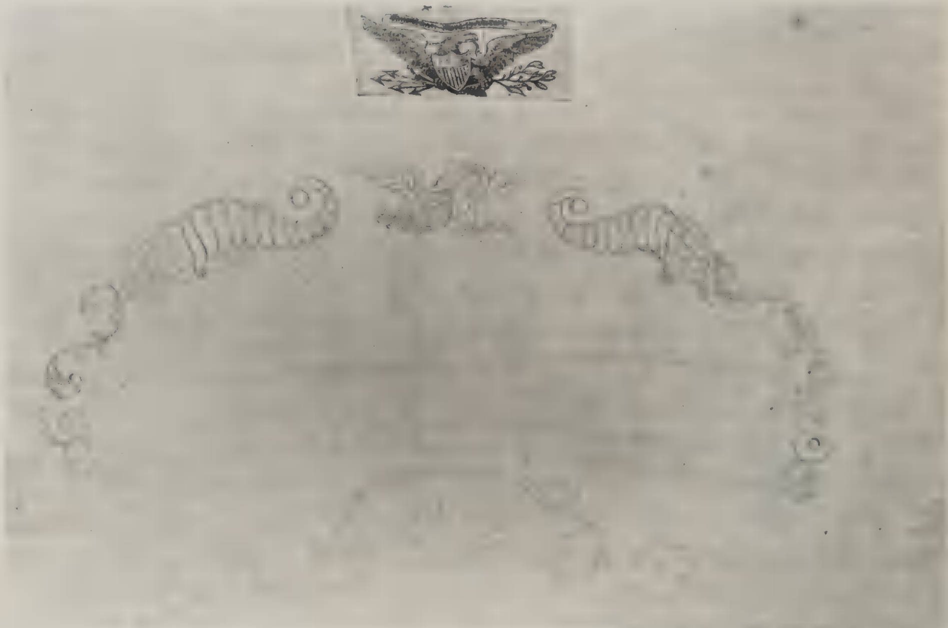


FIG. 42. A stern carving design by Samuel McIntire for an unidentified vessel, showing an eagle motif. The woodcut pasted above served as his model.

deck, and the double window separating the light room from the magazine.

Just when he began painting the hull is unknown, but the job was not completed until just before the ship sailed in December. According to his own account, he and his assistants painted 5,344 yards at 25¢ a yard and another 1,025 at 20¢ a yard for a total of $1,544, excluding an additional $4 charged to cover the cost of measuring the areas painted to be able to charge for the whole job. In the course of it, he and his men used up sixty paint brushes, seventy-eight gallons of black varnish, sixty-nine gallons of boiled oil, 275 pounds of whiting, 200 pounds of yellow paint, 125 pounds of white lead, twenty pounds of vermillion, sixty pounds of Venetian red, fourteen gallons spirits of turpentine, and 8,000 pounds of bar lead, 7,127 of which were expended on his plumbing work. Finally, he also painted twenty-four buckets, forty-eight cartridge boxes, and 100 tin lanterns, the latter two both inside and out.

From Howard's painting, the external colors of the hull show black down to the copper sheathing, except for a broad ochre band—either painted or caused by paying the timber with tar—between the main and channel wales. The outer faces of the gunport lids, if the half-shut bridle port lid is any indication, are the same, but the inboard surfaces are red. So, too, in all likelihood, was the gun deck interior. The knightheads are red, but the headrails, boomkins, and catheads are ochre or "natural."

The spars are colored in the Howard painting as follows: fore, main, and mizzen masts red from at least deck level to a height of about five and a half or six feet; then natural as far aloft as the crossing of the lower yards. Everything from that point, up to and including the caps, is black. Topmasts are natural from the cap of the lower masts to the crossing of the topsail yards; then black to the top of the caps; topgallant masts natural to the mastheads. All square yards are black, including the spritsail yard and the spritsail-topsail yard. Also black are the gaff, boom, bowsprit, dolphin-striker, and the area adjacent to and surrounding the jibboom cap. That part of the jibboom lying against the bowsprit, including the bowsprit bees and cap, is black; the remainder, natural.

The subject of the ship's pumps came to the fore during the third week of August. From the bills, the *Essex* appears to have been equipped with three principal types: a head pump, chain pumps, and the old-fashioned log pumps. By the time she left Salem she also carried five hand pumps—four of copper and one of tin—and an "engine" with copper tub, pipe suction and leading, complete with a leather hose fastened together in sections by four tin joints, in all forty-eight feet long. They all came under the care of the ship's carpenter.

At almost the same moment that Messrs. Bartlett and Brown hauled a small hand-pumper engine to the yard to water down the ship in an attempt to keep her from drying out in the hot August sun, Waters was busy contracting for the permanent pumps.

"I am inform'd," Joseph Waters wrote to John Howe of Back Street, Boston, "that you Cast the Head Pump for the Frigate *Boston*, & as we shall want one soon for the Frigate building in this Town, take the liberty of informing you, that if you will undertake to Cast it, on the same terms you Cast the *Boston*'s, I am ready to contract with you for the same—You will please to give me an answer, by Return of the Post, & youll oblige. . . ." Four days later, on 26 August, 300 pounds of lead in twenty-four bars were delivered to Howe's shop. The head pump itself was described in a memorandum written by William Hackett.

Lead Pump, for the Frigate *Essex*		
the Distance, from the Light water	feet	In
line to the top of the Plankshear	24	—
the Spout to Go in thrugh the Horspeces, Just above the Plankshear		

The head pump was delivered in Salem toward the beginning of September, "served," and lashed to a joist for shipment. It took four days to install.

Jonathan Balch, pump and blockmaker on Balch's Wharf, Boston, was engaged to make the chain pumps, the exact number of which is not specified but probably totaled two. Whether or not he also constructed any of the wheels is uncertain although the ironmongery for the chain pumps probably had been undertaken by Samuel Burrill & Son who charged for "Hooping Said pumps—Horns for the Tumbler [sprocket wheel] Exel Tree Collars and Nails—Crank for Do and Spair Esses." The chain pumps, located abaft the mainmast, consisted of double cylinders passing through all decks to a pump cistern in the hold, through which revolved a chain fitted with metal discs armed with leather. Cranks on the gun deck turned the chain, by which means the water in the hold was discharged over the gun deck through the scuppers.

I am in want of Abougt 8 pounds of the best Ingish Leather to Leather the Chain for the Chain pumps for the Frigate that you are Agent for [Balch wrote to Waters on 27 August]. I Cannot Get it here under one dollar pr pound I Cannot Go on any further till I have it perhaps You Can procure it, at Salem much Cheaper please to let me know Your wishes About it, & Also what Vessell I shall send it down in.

"Agreeable to your Request," Waters answered him on the twenty-ninth, "send you by the Stage this afternoon 10 pounds of the best Leather, this place affords, & hope it will answer your expectation—you will please to have the Chain pumps compleated, as soon as possible, & send them down by Capt. Southward or any other Salem Coaster, Shou'd they be ready before Cap^t Southward. . . ."

Balch would be called upon to supply another chain for his pumps later in the autumn, but delivery of the original order and installation prior to launching was important. Until she swelled, the ship would certainly leak; means had to be in hand to deal with the situation immediately. Hackett told Waters to "hurey Balch for the Chain Pumps" on 3 September, but they did not arrive until the twenty-fourth, six days before the date set for the launching. Balch himself came down to Salem to oversee their installation.

The common log pumps—logs bored out along their length—were presumably prepared under the supervision of Enos Briggs, although Benjamin Felt, the blockmaker, had been responsible for their manufacture. The manner of boring is illustrated as a detail in the 1806 painting of the Crowninshield family's new wharf. (Fig. 43.) The two blacksmiths, Alden Briggs and Seth Brooks, fabricated many of the parts for them—hooks, dogs, spears, brakes, bolts, hoops, and the pump boxes. They were carted to the shipyard during the first two weeks of September.

The yet to be completed spars again began to worry Waters. Save for the bowsprit, which was then being fitted to permit the carpenters to finish laying the forecastle deck, none of the others were intended to be stepped before launching but would be needed immediately afterwards. The ship would have to be hove down to remove all vestiges of the launching cradles before the riggers could roll up their sleeves and get down to work. Only the leverage of the lower masts could accomplish that end; their presence, therefore, was essential before the date of the launch.

Hearing nothing from Laighton at Portsmouth, Waters sent off a letter on 6 September. "Six days have passed since I expected to have heard from you about [the remainder of] the Masts, & the time drawing near that we intend to Launch the *Essex*—I have to request that you will write me, by return of the Post, & inform me what time, I may have a Vessel at your place, to take them on board, for I assure you, the Committee for building the Ship, are anxious about them, as well as myself, & a disappointment, by their not being here in time, will make it very disagreeable to us all, & especially the Riggers, as they are all here from Boston, & their Rigging fixed, & are ready for the Masts, as soon as the Ship is Launch'd." The Portsmouth stagecoach driver delivered the letter to Laighton in person that evening.

> I should have wrote to You sooner [Laighton answered] but there was a Gentleman calld last week to see how the work came on a kinsman of Yours. I mentioned to him I should not write to You untill the last of this week, for I considred I could not Inforome You so particular about the work. I have been verey putt to it to gitt the other Cheek piece & with my utmost endeavour have not got the piece on the Spot as Yett, but will be here to Morrow by twelve OClock. The Miz^{n} Mast is done & the Main Mast is done to puting on the hoops and I think without doubt you may have a Vessel sent here by Mondy week as I exspect to have the lower Mast compleated by that time, & by the Saturday following I think to have the whole work compleatd . . . N.B My endeavour shall not be wanting to compleat the work sooner if posible. I shall not concern with batting Yards unless I find I am beforehand.

True to his word, and much to Waters' relief, the mastwork was loaded aboard a coasting schooner commanded by Noah Kendrick on 23 September and sailed for Salem the following morning. Laighton told Waters: "I had not time to fix the Cap, nor the panch on the Miz^{n} Mast, nor had I time to heel the Mast. The Main Mast heel is cutt the bigness fore & Afft, and I wish when the Carpenter foxes the heels he would plum the head 8 or 10 inchs Above the howns then the Step will Stand far [fair] withe trusltrees—The remainder of the spars I shall make as quick as possible . . . PS the Gaff appears two long by considerable if You wish to have the Other Shorter please to let me know." Waters instructed him to make it of equal length.

Unfinished business involved the ironwork supposedly being finished by Elisha Hill, 3rd.

> I have got your studensail Boom irons for the end of the Yard arms compleated [Hill reported on 26 September] and am sorrow I could not make the Quarter

> irons, for my misfortune this Summer has putt me considerably backward with this work that I cou'd not get it ready to go up with the rest of the work. I feel myself unhappy to think I cou'd not execute the work for the Caps &c. As I was so suddenly calld upon I cou'd not have time to compleatte it But what I have undertaken I hope has given you satisfaction. . . .

Waters was in the process of writing back to Hill the following day to tell him to send along the boom irons as soon as they had been made when he was interrupted. Either Briggs or Hackett burst in on him angrily with the disagreeable news that Hill's joint hoops for the masts had just been examined closely and had been found entirely unacceptable. "Since writing the above," Waters added in a postscript, "am sorry to be obliged to inform you that the Work is disapproved off [sic]."

> If there can now any ammendment be made in Salem [Hill replied] please to have it done and charge the same to me I shall receive it with pleasur I tried my utmost to give satisfaction but the last of the work I did was oblige to be done with little time as the vessel was totaly waiting and perhaps was not so well executed. Although I requested M^r Leighton not to receive it unless in workman like manner done for I knew I could not do it all myself as I have been depriv'd of the use of my hand some time but Sir I think the customs of the places are not alike which may perhaps make some odds, Sir I sent the boom Irons on board of Capt Benjamin Babage of this place for Salem [who also freighted up some of Laighton's smaller spars] I hope those you will like as I made them equally to the boom Iron the master Rigger saw here which he approved of . . . Sir It would have been much greater satisfaction to me to have heard the work was approv'd of than to have receiv'd the letter I have.

This matter, he wrote again later, "is verry disagreeable to me respect^g the Joint Hoops there not being close was the choice of the people in Portsmouth respect^g the ship *Congress* and was in hopes it would have suited you as the mast it is probable will shrink which the keys may be set upon respecting the span for the cap I did not make it myself it was put on when I was absent from the shop I did not see it untill the cap was sent for And I never could get an opportunity of altering it If I could have it never should have gone." Thus ended the affair with the unfortunate Hill, except for Hill himself in loss of reputation and in having to pay for alteration work in Salem.

The riggers, M^{c}Clennan & Sanders, had installed themselves at Salem in early September, when they occupied three rigging lofts in Upton & Porter's

"Long Store" on Union Wharf. They would remain there nearly four months until the lease was given up on the fifteenth of November. It seems likely that after signing their contract they may have subcontracted some of the smaller jobs to local jobbers, but this impression cannot be substantiated in any way other than by the suggestion from the bills of the various carters who were hauling small loads of rigging around Salem weeks before M^{c}Clennan & Sanders appeared on the scene. The three major ropewalks operating in Salem at the time each contributed to the manufacture of the necessary cordage.

Traditionally, Joseph Vincent produced the cordage for the foremast, Jonathan Haraden that for the mainmast, and Thomas Briggs that for the mizzen. It is impossible to tell from the bills. Several other partially covered or completely open walks existed around Salem at the same time, but the three most important—entirely covered ones—were given the work for the frigate because no one of them, singly, could have produced sufficient quantities for the *Essex* on schedule.

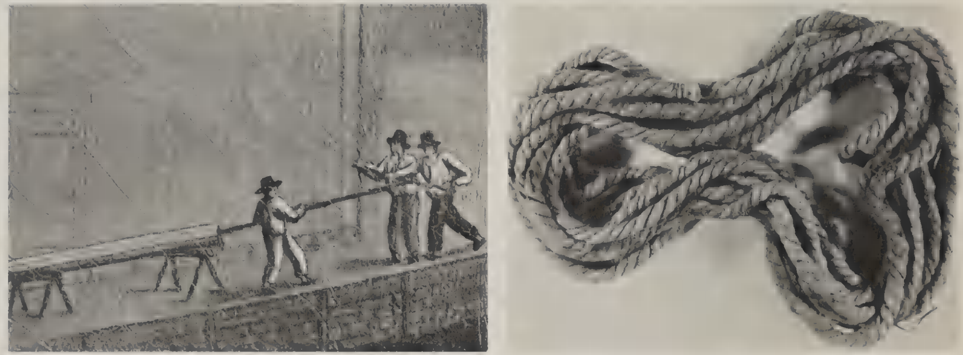


FIG. 43. (*Left*) A detail of George Ropes, Jr.'s painting of Crowninshield's Wharf, 1806, showing men boring out logs for common ships' pumps, and (*right*) a length of match rope made for the frigate *Essex* by Joseph Vincent.

Just after the Revolutionary War, only one ropewalk of importance, that managed by Joseph Vincent, was in operation in Salem. Several others stood in various parts of town, decaying and empty. Of these, one located between Beckett and English Streets crossed Derby Street at right angles and formed the eastern terminus of the latter until 1795 when, after four years of animated discussion among the inhabitants of the area, what the wind had not already blown down was pulled down and removed to make way for an ex-tension of Derby Street toward Salem Neck. By 1799, the Salem ropemakers had become an exclusive brotherhood with their own customs and holidays. It was they, the Reverend William Bentley was to grumble some years later, who, in defiance of the Sabbath, were wont to crawl into the ropewalks on Sundays to "spend away the day in concealment," drinking and gambling.

As the most experienced practitioner of the trade, Joseph Vincent was known "for his generous hospitality, his perfect uprightness of character, his unostentatious charities, his great intelligence, and for the frank expression of his opinions." Sixty-one years old in 1799, Vincent had been born in Kittery, Maine, to which place his father had emigrated from Tuscany and had set himself up as a boatbuilder. Joseph carried on a ropemaking business in Kittery, but after being burned out before the Revolution he came to Salem and in time acquired control of his own walk, at which his son Matthew was foreman. The walk was located between Forrester and Briggs Streets to the east of Salem Common, fronting the shallow flats of Shallop, now Collins, Cove. It began just behind his house and ran down to the cove, but, as great length was necessary for a ropewalk, he soon began extending it into the cove itself. On 5 October 1795, the last pier was sunk into the cove, in all twenty piers of 360 feet from the shore. In early December the same year, forty fathoms of it blew down in the wind but was soon rebuilt.

Vincent's bills in The *Essex* Papers, which may not be complete, indicate that he manufactured 17,207 pounds of cordage for the frigate and one sixteen-inch cable weighing 6,477 pounds. He also made part of the ship's supply of match rope, a fifty-one foot length of which is still preserved in the Peabody Museum of Salem.

A short distance north of his walk, and parallel to it, stood another operated by Thomas Briggs, whose wife Anna was Vincent's daughter. Briggs, unrelated either to Enos or Alden, had been born at Little Compton, Rhode Island, in 1758, but had come to Salem as a young man. Bentley was not an admirer, writing of him at his death three and a half years after the building of the *Essex*, "He was assisted in erecting a new Ropewalk, & had great success, but relaxing from his industry, & living with every indulgence of good cheer, he left the vigour of a firm constitution, remained a prey to disease for several years, & finally died very old at 45 years. A fanatic in opinion, as well as in high life, he gave great satisfaction to his friends at death." Bentley further claimed that Briggs "could not read or write, & was as ignorant,

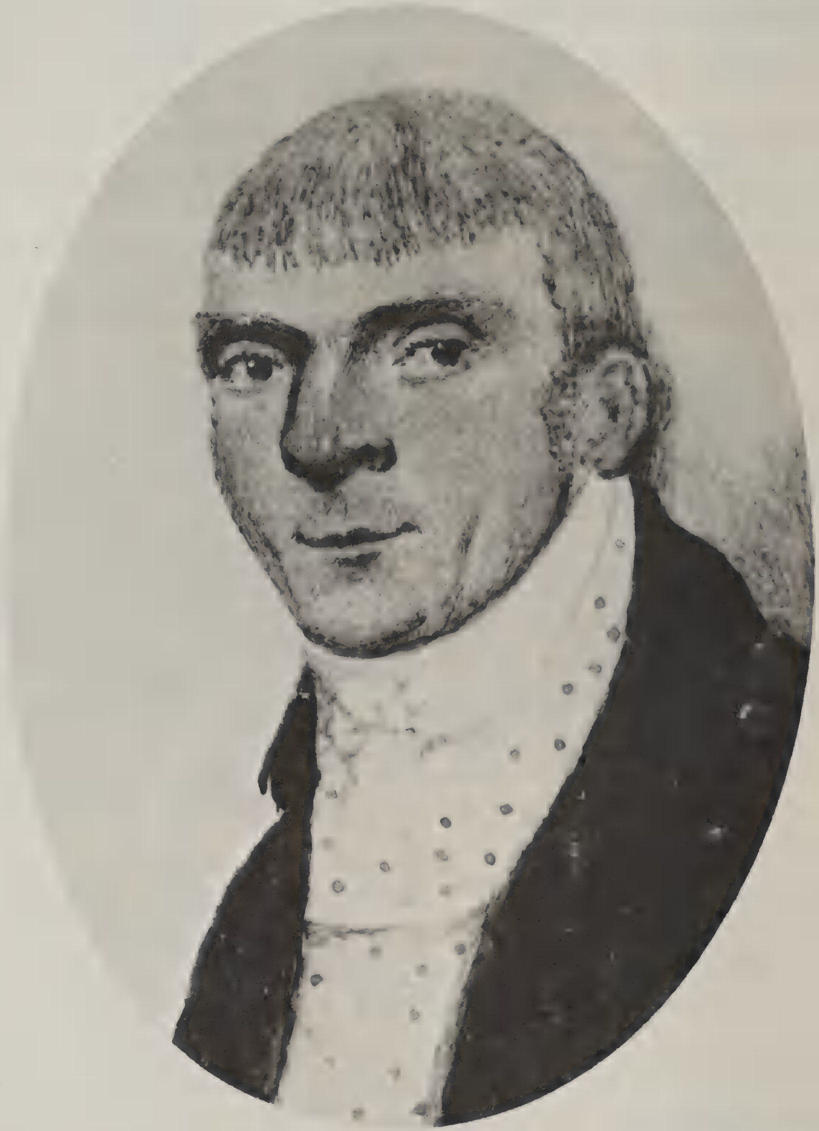


Fig. 44. Jonathan Haraden (1744–1803), Revolutionary privateersman and proprietor of one of the three Salem ropewalks which made the cordage for the *Essex*.

except of his own occupation, as a man in civil society could be," a statement prompted by ill will of long standing.

In January 1791, Briggs had purchased a parcel of land and began building his walk on Pleasant and Briggs Street. Bentley visited him toward the latter part of August that year and found him adding 300 feet to his building. His land gave him 150 fathoms of length, 900 feet, not enough for his cables. Like Vincent's, his walk would also extend over the flats into Shallop Cove.

Among Briggs' steadiest customers were Billy Gray, Elias Hasket Derby, John Norris, Peabody & Perkins, Timothy Brooks, and Wait & Peirce. On the flyleaf of his Ropewalk Ledger he wrote: "Strange as it may appear but no more So than true, that Cordage being In Demand my Gang of twenty people Employed Dayly in the Rope Walk that there is not Due to me on[e] farthing on Book Note or Bonds this 12th Day of January 1796—the Above is Noticed as Remarkable Occurance."

Briggs was responsible for most of the large cordage manufactured for the *Essex*, in all something in excess of 35,000 pounds of it, including 100 cwt. of standing and running rigging, six cwt. of ratline, three sixteen-inch cables of approximately sixty-five cwt. each, a towline, hawser, three messengers, "white" wheel rope, white rope for the cabin gun breechings, and match rope.

Jonathan Haraden's ropewalk was the smallest of the three, yet from the surviving accounts he seems to have provided more cordage for the *Essex* than Vincent but considerably less than Briggs—something approaching nine and a half tons of it, including one sixteen-inch cable. His walk stood on Brown Street, northwest of the Common. A native of Gloucester, Haraden had been a resident of Salem for many years and gained substantial repute during the Revolution as one of the town's most daring and resourceful privateersmen. A past Master of the old "Marine Society at Salem in New-England," founded in 1766, his character was summarized after his death in November 1803 by the ever-present Bentley. "Died in this town Capt. Jonathan Haraden, aet. 60. He was one of our most intrepid Commanders in the Revolution. He was an accomplished gentleman, of cool temper, of generous courage, & a most successful Officer in all his engagements at Sea. No man had a higher reputation, or could have greater favour among all who were under him. After the war his health failed, & his circumstances were narrow, & he finally died after a very lingering sickness of a Consumption. He owned the Rope walk in Brown street near the New Burying Ground."

As activity around Salem increased at an accelerating rate throughout September, nearly everything was in train for the moment long awaited, yet really not so long, for the *Essex* would be launched only twenty-four weeks after the laying of her keel.

NOTES

The lightning "rod" supplied by Revere for the *Essex* has been discussed in *The American Neptune*, III (1943), 269, by M. V. Brewington who feels it was a chain of long bar links with a silvered point at one end which was hoisted aloft to the truck of the mainmast by the flag halliards, the chain being hung down along the backstay with its lower end trailing in the water.

Rollers, such as Revere's eleven composition rollers, for use along the tiller sweep are illustrated in a drawing on page 83 of Arthur Bugler's *H.M.S. Victory: Building, Restoration and Repair* (London, 1966).

Samuel McIntire began working aboard local vessels by doing joiner's work, but by the mid 1790's had begun to carve "Catfaces" and "scrowles." In 1798 he carved the "Head with its Bracketts & traill[boards] . . . Stern, Quarter Galleries, Scrowls" for Elias Hasket Derby's new ship *Mount Vernon.* See Fiske Kimball, *Mr. Samuel McIntire, Carver: The Architect of Salem* (Portland, Maine, 1940) and M. V. Brewington, *Shipcarvers of North America* (Barre, Massachusetts, 1962).

The Reverend William Bentley provides most of the information about the Salem ropewalks in his *Diary.* Thomas Briggs' Ropewalk Ledger (1792–1799) is in the Essex Institute, and the Peabody Museum has numerous account books of later Salem ropemakers.

St. Catherine's Day, the twenty-fifth of November, was the ropemakers' annual day of celebration. St. Catherine, the patroness of spinsters, and also the Empress Catherine of Russia, who encouraged the manufacture of cordage in her domains, were combined and the day adopted for a festival. No work was done in the walks. American and Russian flags were displayed; processions during the early evening, salutes fired from cannon planted on the Common, and banquets in the walks completed the occasion.

Descriptions of ropemaking techniques may be found in such sources as David Steel, *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship* (London, 1794) and J. Revell Carr, "The Rope Machines of Mystic," *The Chronicle* of the Early American Industries Association, XXVI (1973), No. 1, 1–6.

CHAPTER 9

The Launching

ON the third of September, the *Salem Gazette* corrected a false report which had been circulating outside the town of Salem to the effect that the launching of the *Essex* was imminent.

> The Centinel has announced the 12th inst. for the Launching of the Frigate building in this town, but we are requested to mention that this is a mistake, and that no time has yet been fixed on for that purpose.

No one taking the trouble to consult the tide tables in a copy of the Almanac for 1799, however, could harbor any doubt when the launching was most likely to take place, particularly if any stock were to be placed in William Biglow's doggerel of the previous winter and Enos Briggs' ready acceptance of it. The highest tides of the month would take place on Monday the thirtieth exactly at noon, a time so perfect it seemed almost preordained.

Ten days later, on the thirteenth, the *Gazette* announced it officially. "THE LAUNCH OF THE ESSEX FRIGATE, in Salem, will be on Monday the 30th instant. With submission, she will begin her motion precisely at twelve o'clock, to take her station in her watery element, and join the list of the Navy of the United States; at which time, all those that are curiously disposed may attend and join the Federal Salute. E[nos]. B[riggs]."

The occasion should by rights have been untouched by any stratagem of Fate, yet already the full bloom had faded. Elias Hasket Derby had died.

Derby's death came as a hammer blow to Salem and its people even though his decease must have been expected, or at least feared, for a number of weeks. No other man during the preceding generation had done so much to innovate the town's commercial prosperity, a prosperity which rubbed off on others by inspiration. No doubt the Crowninshields would have disagreed; they had become so disaffected with the Derbys that they had even refused to attend the funeral of Derby's wife, herself a Crowninshield, the previous spring.

It was the end of an era. In years to come, Derby's sons and sons-in-law would prove to be lacking the spark that had inspired him to his worldwide commercial enterprises. For a while, afterwards, the Crowninshields and

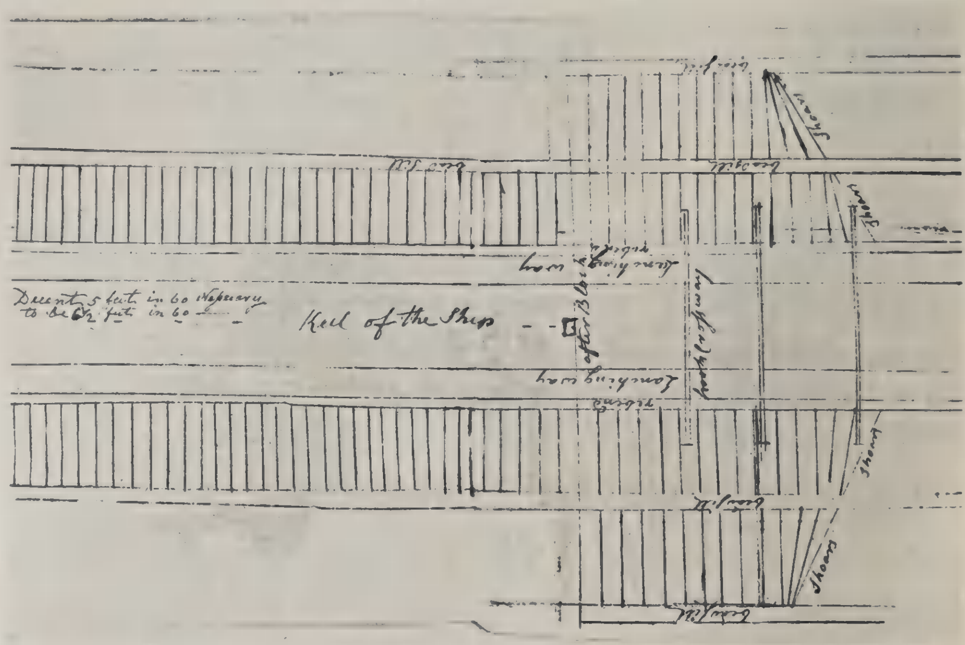


FIG. 45. Sketch by William Hackett of the launching ways for the 74-gun ship *America*, built at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, during the American Revolution.

Billy Gray and Joseph Peabody would inherit their crowns as merchant princes, but times would never be the same again. When Derby died of angina pectoris, aged sixty, his estate was valued at $1,053,353.07, which resulted in this extraordinary man, who had one blue and one brown eye, to acquire the reputation of having become the first millionaire in the United States.

He had retained his mind to the last. Two and a half weeks before he died, he had been in the cupola of his new, McIntire-designed mansion in Derby Square, spyglass to his eye, observing one of his ships in the harbor. "I have nothing to say to you further respecting Your Voyage," he wrote afterwards to his employee, Captain Stephen Phillips, "but looking at your Ship with my Glass, I observe your Main & Fore Top Sails was very Badly Cut & the Same Spars wou'd set at least one Quarter part more Canvas," ending by instructing Phillips what to do about it. Derby made his will four days before his death, leaving his estate in more or less equal shares to his children, directing his vessels then at sea to pursue their voyages to conclusions for the benefit of his estate, and bequeathing small sums to friends and relatives, his gardener, and to his two black servants, Saba and Rose. He was speaking to

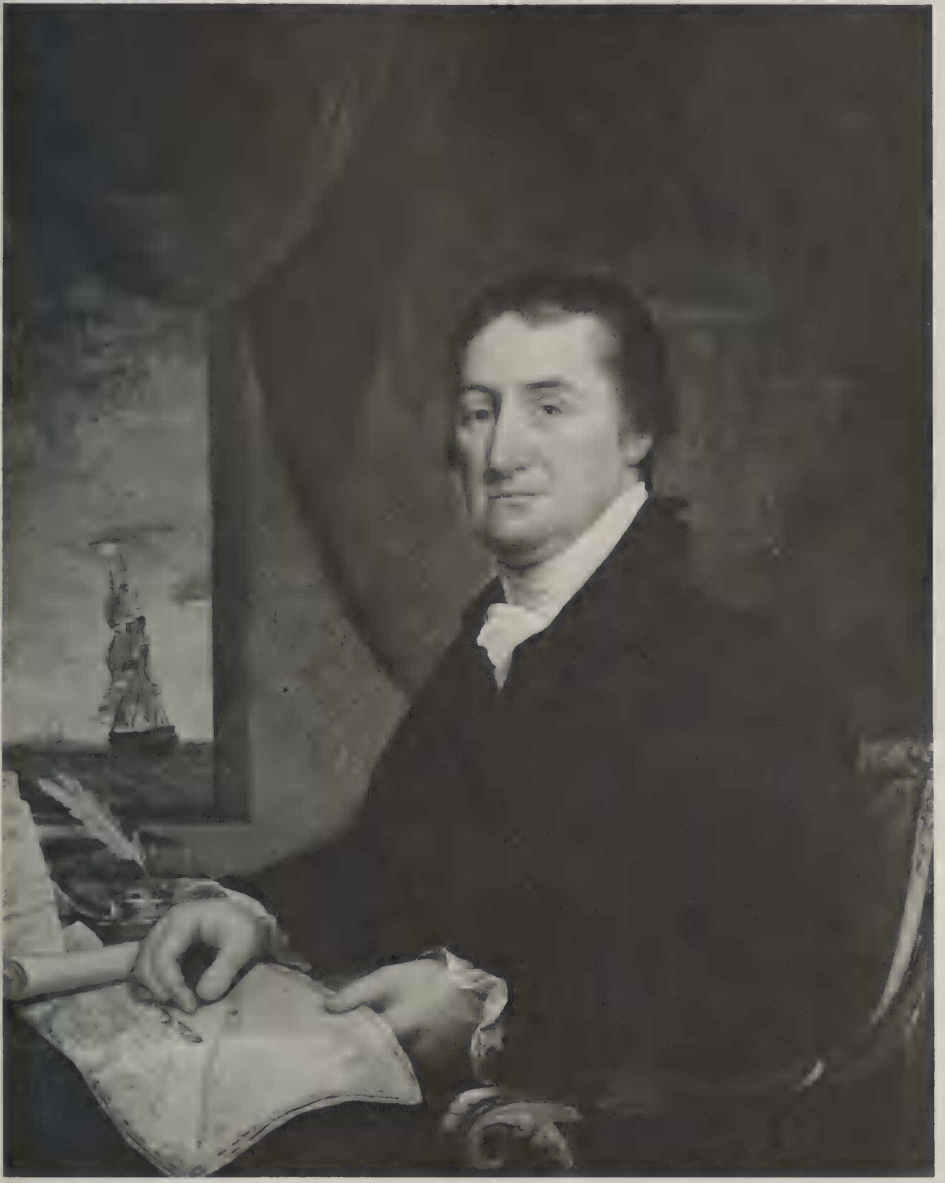


FIG. 46. Elias Hasket Derby (1739–1799), the "merchant prince" of Salem and one of the two largest contributors to the frigate subscription. From an oil by James Frothingham.

Saba, exhorting him to make good use of his inheritance, when he died at 8 P.M. on Sunday, 8 September 1799.

Business had to go on as usual. Isaac Perkins carted the two bower anchors to the shipyard on Monday to be stocked. John Black collected the stream anchor from the Iron Factory on Wednesday, even as Derby's funeral was in progress. On Thursday, the men finished coppering the *Essex*, and one of Enos Briggs' men, deep down in her hold, was shoveling wood chips and shavings into baskets to be hauled up through the hatches and to be carried off home by the workmen for winter kindling. Deacon James Gould was busy turning stanchions, spokes for the wheel, and making gun carriages; Samuel Masury had finished proving the ship's guns at the fort. The last twenty pieces of sailcloth were being removed from the Duck Manufactory to Buffum & Howard's sail loft, and new directives from Stoddert were causing Waters to begin thinking about all the things that needed doing once the *Essex* was in the water.

On 21 September, the two cables needed to moor the ship after the launch were transported to Winter Island from Thomas Briggs' ropewalk. It was a Saturday. At 11 A.M., twenty-eight men sent up from the shipyard mustered on the edge of the Common near the headhouse. Gradually, volunteers, laborers, and the gangs from the neighboring walks began to join them until some two hundred men, excluding spectators, had collected. As they gathered, one of the giant sixteen-inch cables was singled out and wooldering

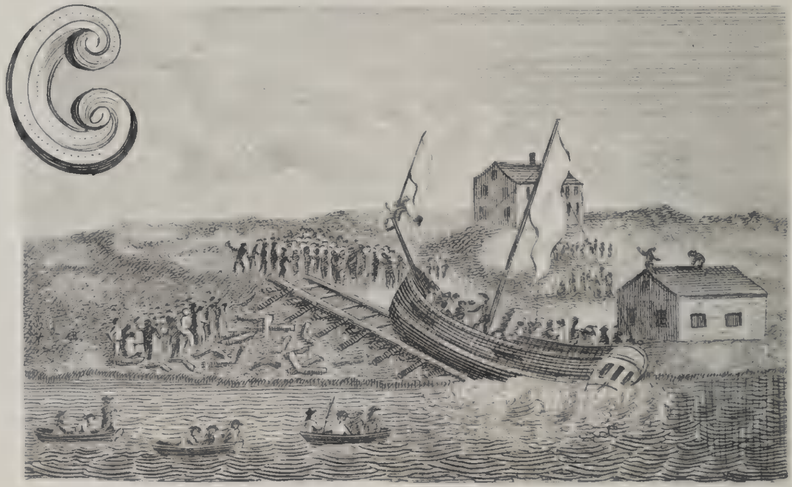


FIG. 47. The launching of a small schooner or brig, presumably from Enos Briggs' Stage Point shipyard. From the membership certificate of the Salem Marine Society, 1797.

sticks—thick, yard-long rods used to control the closing of the strands as they twisted—were forced under it at right angles every few feet. It became, as one eyewitness described it, quite a holiday in the neighborhood. Crowds pressed in on all sides as the workmen, in pairs, grabbed opposite ends of the wooldering sticks, heaved them up in unison onto their shoulders, and, flanking the cable, marched off under displays of the American flag to the stirring sound of fifes and drums playing "Yankee Doodle." By 3 P.M., their mile-long walk ended, while the second cable came up from the rear on wheeled trucks.

A mysterious riot, of which nothing whatever is known, with "high threats but no blood" erupted between sailors and soldiers at the fort on the twenty-fifth. The same day, Thomas Briggs carted the towline and mast fall to the yard; on the twenty-seventh, the carpenters turned out to haul the cables aboard to be bent to the anchors, and on the following day, the last full workday before the launching, completed the ways and removed the last of the unessential staging and ramps.

That last Friday and all through the weekend the road leading to Winter Island swarmed with the curious, "passing & returning at all hours, night as well as day." The Reverend Bentley, in the interval, had been ruminating upon the startling news that "No invitations are [to be] given to see the launching of the Frigate." This was most unusual, because the accepted mode was for the shipbuilder and the owners—in this case the Frigate Committee—to issue private invitations to selected individuals, the uninvited having to settle for an inferior view of the proceedings while the privileged either rode the vessel down the ways or were provided with prime ground space from which to observe the unfolding of the drama.

The Frigate Committee in its wisdom had decreed that those who wished to pay a quarter of a dollar for the liberty of watching from the most advantageous position could do so seated upon banks of bleachers they had ordered built up the side of the little promontory on the westerly side of the cove. Its decision to refrain from issuing formal invitations, however, arose not so much to sidestep the very real difficulties of accommodating the thousands of spectators expected to show up, but, as it later came out, particularly to exclude the President of the United States, John Adams, then summering at his home in Quincy south of Boston. A rumor to that effect soon surfaced in Boston and began to make the rounds. When Timothy Pickering queried Senator Benjamin Goodhue whether or not it was true, the latter confirmed it: "the reason why the President was not invited to the launch of our Frigate [as he had been to the launching of the frigate *Boston*] was because it was said he was going to send our Envoys to France, this is true, for it was in contemplation with the committee, and on that idea it was omitted." The staunch Federalist committee, it seems, was unwilling to stomach what, to it, was the hypocracy of the proposed Ellsworth Mission, or an untimely rapprochement with France, or, especially, the author of such ill-considered schemes.

"The Launching of the Frigate," wrote Bentley in his diary on 30 September 1799. "Everything was in full preparation. The morning gun [at Fort William] was fired & nothing then remained to be done but to prepare the tallow, drive the wedges, remove the blocks & let her go." The footloose and keenest to witness the last-minute preparations began early in the morning to make their way toward the shipyard, where Enos Briggs and his men already had been out in force for a number of hours with a contingent of the riggers standing by to assist. By mid-morning, a converging stream of pedestrians, horsemen, wagons, and carriages coming up Derby Street and from the direction of the Common had begun to cause a bottleneck at Neck Gate, through which the road continued on toward the Winter Island causeway. At the side of Derby Street, where the harbor came up nearly to the road, the wharves were nearly awash from the rising tide; in the end, late comers found themselves sloshing along portions of the street where the abnormally high spring tide was flooding it. The concourse of people, horses, and vehicles was tremendous. The whole town, it seemed, as well as huge numbers of people from the outlying communities, was pouring up Salem Neck to the shipyard —twelve thousand people, it was estimated, witnessed the launch of the *Essex* from Winter Island.

Some elected to avoid the crush further on by posting themselves along the adjacent shore on Salem Neck. Others, crammed into rowing craft, moses boats, and small sailing boats, stationed themselves off the shipyard cove, well out of the *Essex*'s line of descent but close enough inshore to garner a good view. A few idled away the time before the midday hour to set a scrap of lugsail and to sail back and forth across the mouth of the harbor, while across it, on the Marblehead side, ant-like figures could be seen amassing on Naugus Head. Ships in the harbor and at the nearest wharves were dressed in colors; among them one or two workboats prepared to take hold of the frigate's towline to haul her into deep water should any untoward danger

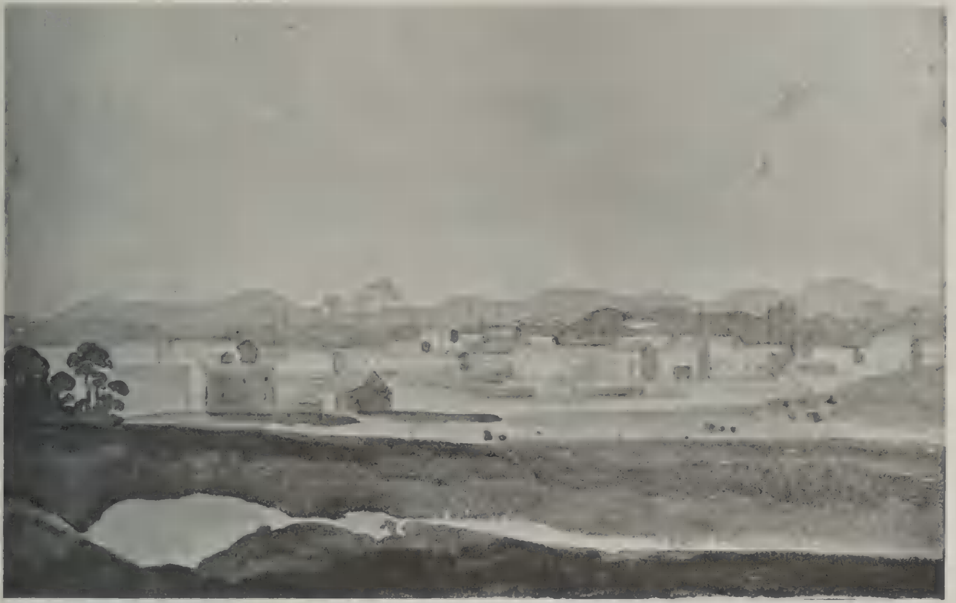


FIG. 48. A detail of the Salem waterfront as seen from Salem Neck, viewed in a watercolor panorama by George Heriot in 1814. The scenery in 1799 was virtually the same except for the addition of Crowninshield's Wharf in the middle ground.

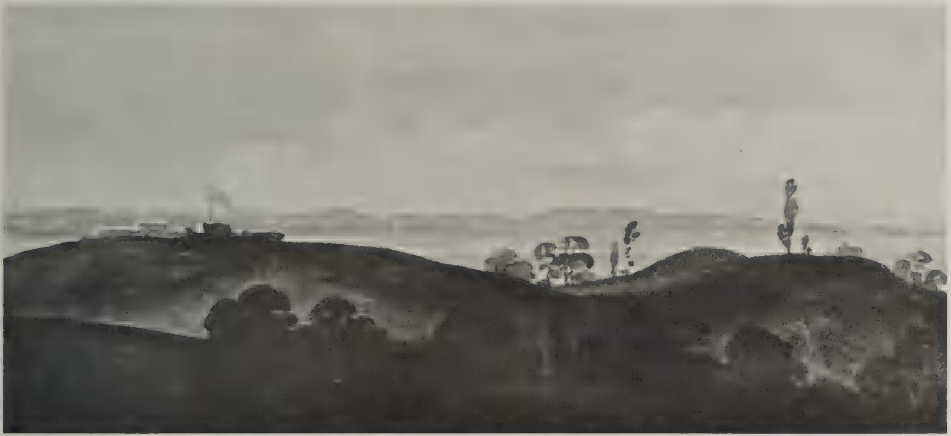


FIG. 49. Winter Island and the fort from Salem Neck, in a detail from George Heriot's watercolor panorama of 1814. The *Essex* was launched from the beach at the base of the hollow shown between the hills at the center.

threaten her after she hit the water. Salem was never to witness such a spectacle again.

Two-thirds of the way along the length of Winter Island from the causeway, the road suddenly forked at a gently sloping hill; the track on the right led up the hill to the head of Winter Island Wharf, where piles of kentledge not yet put aboard still lay stacked, and the well-worn road to the left descended down to Fort William, its ramparts thick with spectators. Beyond the fork and just over a rise, past the jumbled disarray of the shipyard itself, lay the *Essex*, her main and fore yards temporarily stepped as flagstaffs with oversized flags displayed conspicuously upon them and her decks inhabited by the men who intended to take the plunge with her. On her right were the quarter-dollar seats, rising up from the beach on a rocky outcropping of a steep little hill and up the meadow. Within, a section had been reserved for the distinguished members of the Frigate Committee and their guests. Above, ranged around the hills, were mounted the ship's cannon, each attended by a gunner with linstock in hand.

Judging from a painting of another Salem launching—none exists for the *Essex*—the sexes were inclined to drift apart at such affairs; the ladies in their long frocks, shawls, and bonnets, carrying infants and talking volubly amongst themselves; the men bunched together in solemn conversation, while the boys wormed their way forward to the center of activity and got underfoot wherever a hapless workman was attempting to get on with his job.

Precisely at noon, Briggs' men went to work. People had come to expect him to stage a good show, for nothing could be more disappointing and anticlimactic than if the ship should stick on the ways. He would not disappoint them. An unnatural hush fell across the yard in a wave as the carpenters began to "drive the wedges, remove the blocks & let her go." The hull began to tremble gently and to creep almost imperceptibly, until, with a final splintering crack of wood and a groan, she began to move. Then, just as the men were jumping clear, twelve thousand voices bellowed as one: "There she goes!!" Everyone was on his feet by now, whether he knew it or not, the women pointing excitedly and the men cheering wildly and thrashing their hats about in the air. With a small puff of bluish smoke from the ways where the tallow had ignited, a rumbling dash into a cataract of seething water, a dip, and a bobbing, the *Essex* steadied in the harbor waves and the deed was done. The shouting crowd was worked into a frenzy of excitement; foolish grins, moist eyes, and a deal of back-slapping were in evidence on all sides

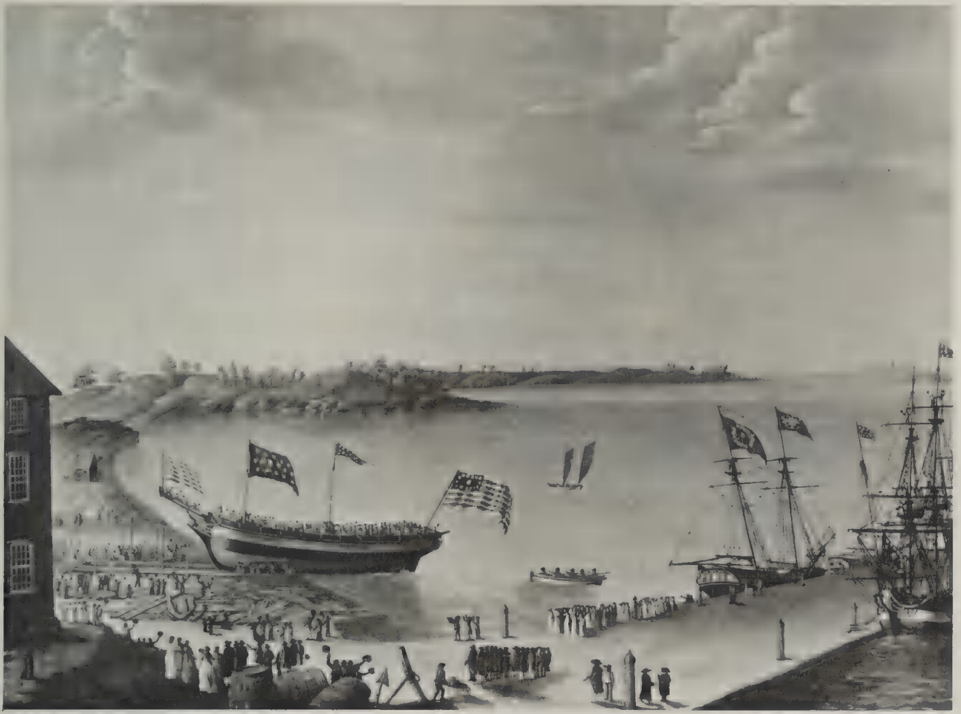


FIG. 50. The launching of the ship *Fame* from Retire Beckett's shipyard in 1802. No painting of the launching of the *Essex* is known; this is the only formal view of an early Salem launching. Winter Island and the fort appear in the background. From an oil by George Ropes, Jr., 1802.

as the guns on the hills began to boom out a Federal salute and an armed vessel in the harbor returned it, gun for gun.

"She moved easily & the launch was happy," wrote Bentley ecstatically. "No accident interrupted the joy of the day."

The *Salem Gazette* was equally fulsome in praise of the event. "Yesterday the FRIGATE ESSEX, of 32 guns, was launched from the stocks, in this town. She went into the water with the most easy and graceful motion, amidst the acclamations of thousands of spectators, and a federal salute from her guns on the hill, returned by an armed ship in the harbour, commanded by Capt. Thomas Williams. The Committee acting for the subscribers, Col. [sic] Hacket, the superintendant, and Mr. Briggs, the master builder, have thus the satisfaction of producing to their country as fine a ship, of her size, as graces the American Navy. It is not yet known who will command her; but it is on all hands agreed that she is well calculated to do effectual service to her country."

And ADAMS *said*, "LET THERE BE A NAVY!" *and there was a Navy.*

To build a Navy was the advice of our venerable sage. How far it has been adhered to, is demonstrated by almost every town in the United States, that is capable of floating a *galley* or a *gun boat.*

Salem has not been backward in this laudable design. Impressed with a due sense of the importance of the Navy, the patriotic citizens of this town put out a subscription, and thereby obtained an equivalent for building a vessel of force. Among the foremost in this *good work*, were Messrs. DERBY and GRAY, who set the example by subscribing TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS each. But alas! the former is no more—we trust his *good deeds follow him.*

Such was the patriotic zeal with which our citizens were impressed, that in the short space of SIX MONTHS they contracted for the materials and equipment of a Frigate of 32 guns, and had her completed yesterday for launching. The chief part of the timber was standing but six months ago—and in a *moment*, as it were, "*every Grove descended*," to put in force the patriotic intentions of those at whose expense she was built.

Yesterday the Stars and Stripes were unfurled on board the Frigate ESSEX, and at 12 o'clock she made a majestic movement into her destined element, there to join her sister craft in repelling foreign aggressions, and maintaining the *Rights* and *Liberties* of a "GREAT, FREE, POWERFUL & INDEPENDENT NATION."

The concourse of spectators was immense; and the averted face of jacobinism was not seen depicted on the countenance of a single one;—but on the contrary, the heart-felt satisfaction of the beholders of this magnificent spectacle, was evinced by the concording shouts and huzzas of thousands, which reiterated from every quarter.

The unremitting zeal of Mr. BRIGGS, the Architect of this beautiful ship, cannot be too highly applauded. His assiduity, in bringing her into a state of such perfection, in so short a time, entitles him to the grateful thanks of his country; and we fondly hope that his labours have not been spent in vain, for we may truly say that he has not *given rest to the sole of his foot*, since her keel was first laid: at least, he will have the pleasing consolation of reflecting on the important service he has rendered his country, in this noble undertaking—A strict and unremitting attention to the line of his profession, for a series of years, has rendered him a truly valuable and important citizen; and we sincerely hope that he will ever receive encouragement and support from the country, to whose commercial prosperity his services have so much contributed.

As Briggs' gang gained control of the *Essex* to bring her up to her moorings, the vast assembly on Winter Island began to disperse back across the causeway. Among them was Captain Benjamin Crowninshield, the only one of his family known to have come to the yard to witness the launch. A fair number of people—those who had subscribed or had done work for her—remained behind after the multitude had slowly departed. By order of the Committee, Enos Briggs had arranged for a post-launching feed. It cost an extravagant $195.08.

The account of the expence of articles
for the entertainment at Launching

viz

Messrs Page & Ropes bill for Spirits and Sundry articles	$60.13
Mr Webbs bill for Lemmons	19.75
Mr Roses bill for Sugar	20.00
Mr Tays bill for Beef & Tongues	37.00
Messrs Brown & Abbots bill for Bread and Puddings	48.88
Mr Luscombs bill for Cheese	6.62
to one barrel of Cyder	1.33
to 10 wt of butter	2.00
to 21 wt of Sugar	2.62
	$198.33
deduct 2¾ Gallons Rum chad in your Bill being returnd by Mr Ward	3.25
	$195.08

In addition, Upton & Porter supplied 140 pounds of crackers, cooked the beef and provided four earthen platters to put it on. It seems to have been a gala affair—punch, hot buttered rum, slabs of beef and tongues, bread and cheese and biscuits, and puddings to finish it off.

Afterwards, those revelers as yet unsatisfied repaired downtown to Webb's Tavern to continue the convivial atmosphere for another few hours. Paul Revere, who had come down from Boston to witness the launch, became so upswept in the gaiety of the occasion that he forgot to give Enos Briggs the rudder chain key he had lugged to Salem with him, but instead left it behind in "Capt Webb's barr room".

NOTES

The letter from Elias Hasket Derby to Captain Stephen Phillips concerning the cut of his sails is in his letterbook at the Peabody Museum as is the Reverend Bentley's funeral oration which suggests that Derby was talking to Saba when he died. The bulk of the Derby Papers are at the Essex Institute.

Bentley and Benjamin F. Browne's "Youthful Recollections of Salem [written in 1869]," Essex Institute *Historical Collections*, XLIX (1913), No. 4, together with scraps of information from The *Essex* Papers, are the sources for the description of carrying the cable from Briggs' ropewalk to Winter Island. Browne also had a vague recollection that the cable slipped at one point, wounding one of the men carrying it.

The same sources, plus accounts in the *Salem Gazette* and the Autobiography of David Augustus Neal, are the basis for the description of the launching and the events leading up to it. Browne recollected being held up by his father from the ramparts of Fort William to witness the launching and that on the way home he noticed the water had been up over sections of Derby Street. Neal, then a small boy, was present as a guest of Captain Joshua Ward aboard his small sailing boat known as "The Lugger." Knowledge of Benjamin Crowninshield's presence derives from Richard Manning, Jr.'s stable account book, inasmuch as he hired a horse for the occasion. President Adams' exclusion from the launching is reported in Benjamin Goodhue's letter of 5 October 1799 to Timothy Pickering, Pickering Papers, XXV, 204, Massachusetts Historical Society. Revere's forgetfulness is from The *Essex* Papers.

An example of misinformation arising from a faulty memory is to be found in the John Crowninshield Miscellaneous Papers at the Peabody Museum. It is worth reproducing in full, with annotations, below. In 1840, John Barton Derby, a grandson of Elias Hasket Derby, then of Boston, wrote a letter to Captain John C. Crowninshield, also of Boston.

"When Capt Hiller lived at the house afterwards occupied by W^{m} Prescott Esq[1] (near the entrance of Salem Turnpike, to Boston) I remember to have been there, one evening, with my Father. It was the evening after the attempt to launch the *Essex* frigate.[2] Capt Hiller, (or Hyllyer,) was present: & Capt Porter of the *Essex*.[3] Hyllyer was an officer in the British Navy. Capt Porter & H. entered upon a description of the naval battles. H contended, that two sloops of war would capture the *Essex*. Porter maintained that the concentration of force on board the *Essex*, would ensure the victory to the frigate. I sat next to Capt Porter. Hyllyer, in the boastful style of British Captains, (of *that* day,) spoke so contemptuously of American naval skill, that Porter retorted, with keeness. At last, as Capt H kept repeating 'His Majesty's Service His Majestys Officers &c:' Porter exclaimed, 'damn, his Majesty!' where upon, Hyllyer rose up, in great wrath: went up stairs, got his pistols, & challenged Capt Porter to go down into the garden, & fight him. Porter, very cooly, says 'very well: & John here shall be my second.' They would have gone down the walk; but the ladies interfered. And, then, began a discussion between them, whether a force concentrated in *one* vessel, was superior to the same number of guns in *two* vessels. Capt. Porter said, that one vessel of 32 guns, would whip two sloops of war, of 16 each. Hyllyer to the contrary. They then expressed a hope, that at some future day, they might have an opportunity to try the experiment.

"What strange events occur in this life! These two gentlemen, lived to try the experiment. Sad Hyllyer was correct, in some degree; owing to the great disparity of force.—This action of the *Essex* & the *Cyane* & *Levant*,[4] I consider the 'crowning glory' of the last war.

"As we grow old, cousin John, we ransack our memories for old stories. And many a pleasant one I can remember of your family: when we all used to meet as 'a band of brothers'.

Yours truly
JOHN B. DERBY[5]

"Tell *me*, 'a story'
Cousin John!"

---

[1] William Prescott, son of the Revolutionary Patriot, was a subscriber to the *Essex*. He lived at 390 Essex Street.

[2] There was no "attempt" to launch the *Essex*. She was launched, successfully, on schedule.

[3] The Captain Hyllyer referred to is presumed by Derby to be James Hillyar (1769–1843), the man who captured Porter and the *Essex* on 28 March 1814. In 1799, however, Hillyar was a lieutenant attached to the Channel Fleet and did not attain the rank of captain until 1804.

David Porter (1780–1843) was a midshipman at the time the *Essex* was launched, although he became a Second Lieutenant shortly thereafter. There is nothing to suggest that he was in Salem at the time as he was under orders to join a ship in Baltimore. Porter did not command the *Essex* before 1811.

If the writer of the letter meant Edward Preble (the first captain of the *Essex*), rather than David Porter, he is equally confused, for Preble was not informed of his appointment to the *Essex* for almost a month after the launching. Preble was never captured by Hillyar.

[4] The *Essex* never engaged the *Cyane* and *Levant*, nor was Hillyar in command of either, nor in combination did they capture an American frigate. *They* were captured by the United States frigate *Constitution*, Captain Charles Stewart, on 20 February 1815.

The *Essex* was captured in 1814 by H.M. frigate *Phoebe* and H.M. sloop of war *Cherub*. Hillyar commanded the *Phoebe*; Porter, the *Essex*.

[5] John Barton Derby, the author, would have been four years old at the time the alleged episode took place. It would be of interest to know what other event or combination of circumstances caused him to cherish this garbled recollection.

CHAPTER 10

October-November 1799

LEST anyone suppose that the launching closed the books on the frigate *Essex*, he need only be reminded that, far from being over, the work simply had altered in character. By degrees, the shipwrights' part of the job was winding down, but the joiners were busier than ever on the interior finish work. The hull launched on the thirtieth of September was just that—a hull sufficiently complete to float but incapable of any other function. Another three months' diligent work was required to transform her into an effective ship of war. Bulkheads had yet to be built for storerooms, Great Cabin, and officers' berths. Internal fittings, from hammock cleats to the fitting of the caboose, still had to be finished. She had to be masted, rigged, watered, provisioned, outfitted, manned, and filled with all the gear that had been accumulating in the Union Wharf warehouses all summer before Salem's part in her history would come to an end.

As anticipated, and as was normal in a wooden ship, the *Essex* began to leak after the launch despite the best efforts of the caulkers and the scrupulous efforts throughout the latter part of the summer to keep her wetted down with a feeble stream from Messrs. Bartlett and Brown's pumping engine. A skeleton crew stayed close by her as a result, pumping her dry every few hours until the planks swelled and the leaks stopped. She lay moored off Winter Island.

Three days after the launching, Joseph Waters hired William Curtis, his schooner *Fame*, and the services of three men to remove what kentledge had already been stowed aboard, and, after the frigate had been careened, to replace it together with the remainder lying on Winter Island Wharf and a final shipment just arrived from Jacob Sheafe in trade for the iron tiller of the *Congress*. Curtis was in pay for fifteen days. By 9 October, McClennan & Sanders' riggers had got in the three lower masts, and she was about to be hove down to remove traces of the launching cradle and to copper the small areas that had been impossible to reach while she lay on the stocks. Less than a fortnight later, she was taking in her kentledge again while Waters was assuring the Secretary of the Navy that she would be taking in her water within a short time.

The coopers had been at work on the water casks since the beginning of June. Proper construction of the casks had long been a matter of especial interest to Stoddert who, in fact, had given his orders on the subject to Waters in late February when he had confirmed him as Navy Agent.

> The Water Casks may be preparing, and it will tend much to advantageous Stowing as prove a great Convenience on board to have them made generally of a large Size.
>
> A supply of Water for 220 Men for Six Months aught to be calculated on, but our vessels generally in their Construction, do not admit of as much Room for Provisions & stores as is necessary, which perhaps may be the Case with this Ship you may therefore calculate on a Supply of 4 Months at one Gallon p day for each man—This will require 26400 Gallons, and Casks of the following Sizes ought to be procured if practicable
>
> | | |
> |---|---:|
> | 20 of 300 Gallons | 6000 |
> | 60 of 200 | 12000 |
> | 40 [of] 150 | 6000 |
> | 20 [of] 100 | 2000 |
> | | 26000 |
>
> These should be made with Staves proportionally thick, and bound with Iron Hoops—If Staves sufficiently large cannot be had, you must be governed by circumstances, and have the Casks made as large as the staves will admit of—They should be well soaked & rinsed and when fitted should have a small quantity of Lime put in them—It is of importance to attend to this as inconveniences have arisen from the Water turning sour & smelling, in new Casks.

At that time, Waters had not been in whole agreement. "The Water Casks," he wrote, "I Shall Ameadatly attend to them—I Expuckt the Cupers or whoever may Contrackt for to Suply them will Want Sume Advances Made them to Enable them to Procure the Staves Heading & Hoops &c—I Shall Indevor to Gitt them Agreeable to the List you have Sent me—I Observe the Smalest Casks Are One hundred Gallons—woud itt not be Conveanant to have Sum from 50 to 60 Gallons as thea would bee much Easear handle I in poart to Transpoart the Water on Board Say 18 or 20 of the Above Size."

On 28 May, Waters had told Stoddert that "the Water Casks Are a Makeing," yet, in fact, the formal contract was not signed until 5 June. The principals were Robert Porter of Beverly, cooper, and Irish-born Hugh Hill, also of Beverly, formerly a pre-Revolutionary Marblehead ship captain and a noted privateersman.

Articles of Agreement Indented, made and concluded the fifth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety nine by and between Joseph Waters of Salem in the County of Essex Naval Agent of the United States for the Frigate *Essex* now building at said Salem on one part, and Hugh Hill of Beverly in said County Merchant and Robert Porter of said Beverly Cooper of the other part.

Witness;—

That the said Hugh and Robert for the considerations hereafter mentioned have agreed and do hereby covenant and agree to and with the said Joseph, that the said Robert shall and will, in a good and workmanlike manner, and according to the best of his knowledge and skill, make, construct, and furnish, for the use of the said Frigate *Essex*, One Hundred and Sixty water Casks, Twenty of which to contain Three Hundred Gallons each, Sixty to contain Two Hundred Gallons each, Forty to contain One Hundred and Fifty Gallons each, Twenty to contain One Hundred Gallons each, and Twenty to contain Sixty Gallons each; that the said Casks shall be made of good white oak Timber, well seasoned, and free from sap, and of a suitable thickness, both heads and [*torn*] the said Casks shall be bound with good [ ] wit, each Cask containing Three [ ] to have twelve Iron Hoops, each [containi]ng Sixty Gallons to have Eight Iron [ ] ich of the other Casks to have Ten [ ] that the said Casks shall all be [ ] completed on or before the twentieth [of Septem]ber next ensuing; and that the said Casks shall be delivered, made in the manner aforesaid, and in good order, at such place in said Salem as the said Joseph shall direct and appoint, on or before the said twentieth day of September next;

In consideration whereof the said Joseph on his part doth covenant and agree to and with the said Hugh and Robert, that he will well and truly pay unto the said Robert, his Executors, Administrators, or Assigns, the Sum of Seven Cents and Five Milles for each and every Gallon that the said Casks made in manner aforesaid shall measure and contain, amounting in the whole to the sum of Two Thousand and Forty Dollars, in the following manner, to wit; Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars part thereof at the Sealing and Delivery of These Presents, and the residue, Twelve Hundred and Ninety Dollars, on the delivery of the said Casks as aforesaid:

To the true and faithful performance of the several articles and agreements above mentioned the said Joseph on his part, and the said Hugh and Robert jointly and severally on their part, do hereby respectively bind themselves, their Heirs, Executors, and Administrators, each to the other, in the penal sum of Three Thousand Dollars.

In Witness whereof the said Parties hereunto set their Hands and Seals interchangeably the day and year first above written.

Signed, Sealed, & Delivered
In presence of us
Joseph Perkins
James Yalding

[Seal & signatures
torn away]

The making of the water casks caused Waters little trouble above a once-monthly ride across the toll bridge to Beverly to inspect their quality. Before delivery, all were painted twice over by Philip and Abijah Chase. They were carted to Salem in lots by the end of the first week in October; on the eighteenth, laborers began filling them, the water being allowed to stand until the last of the month when the casks were started and then refilled. By the end of October, Porter had finished twenty casks of 300-gallon capacity, sixty-one of 200, thirty-nine of 150, twenty-two of 100, and nineteen of sixty gallons; also cooperage of seventy breakers, twelve pump cans, sixty mess cans, fifty kids, two harness tubs, and four nun buoys.

On 15 November, he agreed to further work consisting primarily of rum casks. "I do hereby agree to furnish on the 27th of this present month twenty Casks compleatly Iron bound & made from hard Stuff to contain from fifty to Seventy five Gallons an equal proportion of each, to be made of thick stuff such as is used for one hundred twenty Gallon Casks & the Iron Hoops in proportion, for which I agree to deliver said Casks compleated as above at Eight Cents per Gallon & to deliver the same in Salem free from any expence." His extra bill included the rum casks, two iron "baild" draw buckets, sixteen common draw buckets, ten match tubs, four hospital tubs, two horse buckets, and two more nun buoys, the latter "rigged" by M^c^Clennan & Sanders.

Provisions for the *Essex* fell into three categories: those consumed by the workmen during the period of construction, those expended aboard while the ship remained in port, and those acquired exclusively for sea stores. Only the latter are mentioned here; the "casks of rum sent to the joiners," the "potatoes delivered to the fort," and the like are too numerous in the bills to merit special attention.

Soon after the keel was laid, Stoddert had sent long lists of estimated provisions. Those for six months consisted of the following quantities for 200 men and 260 men respectively:

	[200]	[260]
Beef	85 bbls. (17,000 lbs.)	102 bbls.
Pork	85 bbls. (17,000 lbs.)	102 bbls.
Molasses	335 gallons	400 gallons
Rice	4480 lbs.	60 cwt.
Butter	530 lbs.	635 lbs.
Cheese	4125 lbs.	5000 lbs.
Candles	335 lbs.	400 lbs.
Vinegar	475 gallons	570 gallons
Beans (or peas)	66 bushels	140 bushels
Rum	2378 gallons	2958 gallons
Soap	395 lbs.	474 lbs.
Flour	15 bbls. (2940 lbs.)	18 bbls.
Indian meal	14 bbls.	16 bbls.
Bread	31472 lbs.	424 cwt.
Lamp oil	40 gallons	48 gallons
Potatoes	200 bushels	240 bushels
Salt fish	48 cwt.	60 cwt.

This was intended to be in accordance with the prescribed rations for sailors in the United States Navy, agreeable to an Act of Congress. The following was the full ration per man per day:

Sunday: 1 lb. bread, 1½ lb. beef, ½ pint rice, ½ pint West India spirits.

Monday: 1 lb. bread, 1 lb. pork, ½ pint peas, ¼ lb. cheese, ½ pint West India rum.

Tuesday: 1 lb. bread, 1½ lb. beef, 1 lb. potatoes or turnips, pudding 1 lb. of flour and suet or ¼ lb. of raisins, ½ pint rum.

Wednesday: 1 lb. bread, 2 oz. butter, ¼ lb. cheese, ½ pint rice, ½ pint rum.

Thursday: 1 lb. bread, 1 lb. pork, ½ pint peas, ½ pint rum.

Friday: 1 lb. bread, 1 lb. salt fish, 2 oz. butter, 1 lb. potatoes, ½ pint spirits.

Saturday: 1 lb. bread, ½ pint spirits, 1 lb. pork, ½ pint peas, ¼ lb. cheese.

"As the time is drawing near for the purchasing of the Ships provisions—& as the Bread requires to be made some time before, so as to have an opportunity of drying," Waters had written to Stoddert on 12 September, "I am opinion it shou'd be contracted for immediately." Stoddert's reply essentially told him to exercise his own discretion providing "no delay shall happen to compleating the Ship for Sea."

"In furnishing our Ships of War with provisions," he cautioned Waters on 3 October, "care should be taken that they be good of every kind. The Bread should be of a quality equal to the very best furnished by the Merchants, to their Ships, and with this, the Sailors ought to be contented, it is at least equal to what they have been accustomed to eat—you will therefore be pleased in furnishing the *Essex* with Bread to have it made of this quality and no other."

The contract for bread was signed with Upton & Porter of Salem on 9 October.

This may Certify that we have this Day Agreed with Joseph Waters to Supply What Bread Said Waters may want For the Use of the Ship *Essex* & to Find the Packages to Transport the Same on Board—the Bread to be at 46/ p^{r} C^{t}—& to be made From Good Sweet Flour & to be Well Backid & Dryed to the Satisfaction of Said Waters.

A similar contract for beef was concluded a month later, on 6 November, with Thaddeus Wellington.

This will Certify that I have this Day the Sixth of Novem^{br} 1799 Agreed with Joseph Waters Agent for the *Essex* Frigate—to Suply Said Waters with Fifty

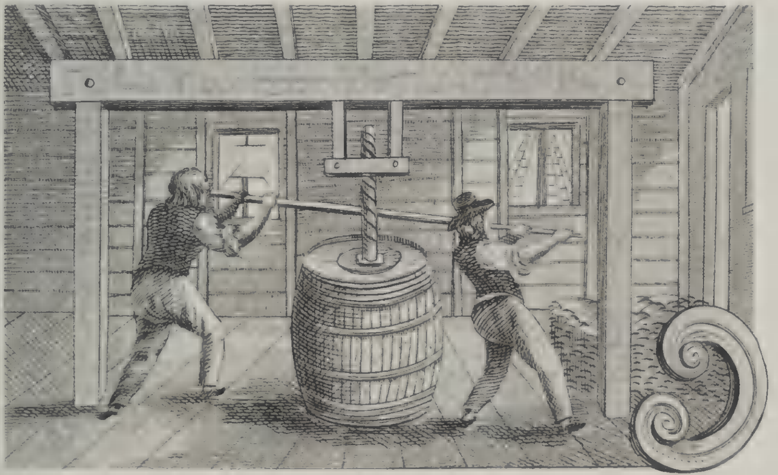


FIG. 51. A screw press for fish packing in a Salem warehouse. From the membership certificate of the Salem Marine Society, 1797.

Barrils of Provison Beff—free from Skins & Necks—& to bee packt in the Best manner Posable with a Sufishant Quanaty of Salt—& Salt peter—& in Barrils Not Acceading 28 Gallons & to be Deleverd at Said Waters Store—for which Said Waters Agrees to pay for Said Beff on the Delevery—Ten Dollars & Fifty Cents p^r^ Barril.

Comparable agreements for the other provisions were made by Waters with local victuallers at much the same time, but no further memoranda of a formal nature are to be found in The *Essex* Papers. The quantities supplied and their respective purveyors are listed in the Purser's Indent in the Appendices.

Substantial progress was made on the *Essex* during the month of October. With the arrival from Portsmouth of all the spars, save for a spare gaff still being made by Luke M. Laighton and other spares being prepared locally by Salem sparmakers Hawkes & Babbidge, the riggers had been able to step the three lower masts within a week of the launching. Carpentry and joinery work below decks proceeded apace in the meantime. Before the ship was hove down, Jonathan Peirce tinned the bread room and began coppering the light room and magazine. Two more bower anchors arrived from the Salem Iron Factory, and Buffum & Howard completed the first of the two suits of sails as well as a set of deck awnings, the rudder and mast coats, wind sails, smoke sails, boat covers, and several canvas covered sleeping cots.

Heaving down had been completed by the week of the twenty-first of October. Soon after, William Curtis had brought all the kentledge alongside for stowing in the hold, and M^c^Clennan & Sanders had got the topmasts up and were beginning to cross the yards. Jonathan Peirce, his other tasks behind him, now turned to the installation of the caboose.

It is quite possible that William Hackett had forgotten about the galley stove or had failed to take into account its actual dimensions as it lay partially dismantled in a warehouse throughout the course of construction, because the evidence seems to suggest that, once Peirce set about to bolt it together in place, it would not fit. Bentley mentions that Hackett was altering the butts of the windlass for the caboose, but what had confronted him was a major alteration in the placement of the cable bitts as well as the scuttles in the forecastle deck and lower deck above and below them. That this took place is known from the fact that Alden Briggs had to manufacture steel-pointed bolts to draw the existing bolts out of the bitts and that forty-two man-days were expended by the carpenters to put things to rights. The armorer's forge, presumably, was fitted about the same time.

The question of the person to command the *Essex* had been a matter of concern for many months, but the closer the ship came to completion the more pressing the problem of selection became. It may be recalled that a year before, when the subscription had been in progress, Stoddert had given assurances that Salem might call into service a man of its choice. The choice of the Frigate Committee had narrowed down to Captain Richard Derby, although rumor had it that the post had been offered to Joseph Waters who had declined the honor due to the pressures of his family situation. That story can no longer be substantiated from contemporary sources.

Richard Derby was Elias Hasket Derby's nephew, son of his elder brother Richard. In 1799, he was thirty-four years of age, had been educated at Harvard College, and for many years had been an active shipmaster. On 26 February 1799, the Secretary of the Navy, on behalf of the President and with the advice and consent of the Senate, had informed him that he had been commissioned a captain in the United States Navy. The letter had made it plain that in the event he chose to accept the commission it was intended that he should superintend the construction of the frigate building in Salem, an extraordinary statement inasmuch as Stoddert had appointed Waters to

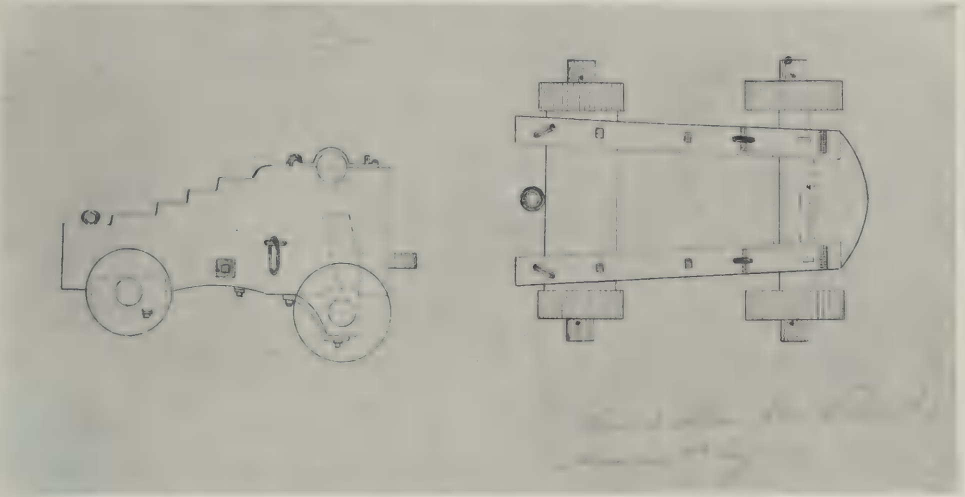


FIG. 52. The *Essex*'s gun carriages in 1809, from a drawing in the Josiah Fox Papers. The dimensions accompanying the sketch are reproduced in the Appendices.

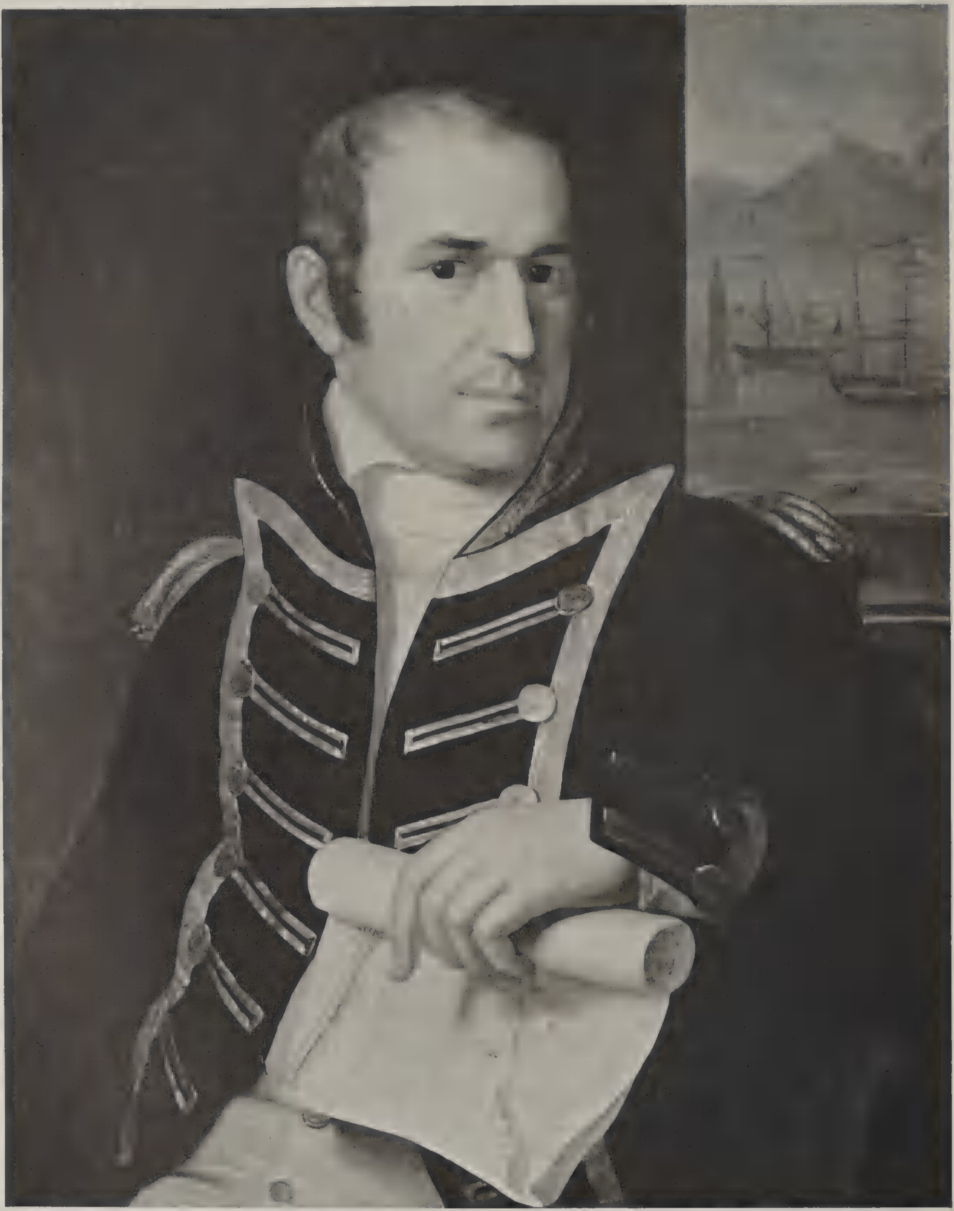


FIG. 53. Captain Edward Preble, U.S.N. (1761–1807), first captain of the *Essex*. From an oil by Rembrandt Peale, circa 1804–1807.

be Navy Agent and to perform the supervisory function not three days before.

Confusion and a lack of substantive information surround Richard Derby who, although he ultimately accepted the commission nevertheless begged off service for the time being. In later years, he became Navy Agent at Pensacola, Florida, and for a time was Naval Storekeeper at Boston, but in October 1799, when he was expected to assume command of the *Essex*, he was abroad in command of the merchant ship *Juno*.

Two days after the *Essex* was launched, the Reverend Bentley remarked that Derby had declined the command, yet at that time Derby could not have done so because he was then somewhere in the vicinity of the Iberian Peninsula. Stoddert, hopeful that he would return to America in time, delayed scratching him off the slate for another three weeks. On 21 October, he could wait no longer and appointed Captain Edward Preble, of Portland, Maine, to command her at least temporarily in Derby's place.

> Having heard nothing of Captain Derby, and the Frigate *Essex* being now ready for the attention of a Commander, I have the honor to direct, that as soon after the receipt of this as you conveniently can, you repair to Salem and assist in preparing that Ship for Sea, to command her in the event of her being ready before Captain Derby returns—It may possibly be a favorite object with the Committee that Captain Derby should have the command of the *Essex*, and I have therefore informed them that he might command her, if he should chuse to do so, upon your return from a cruise—

The Secretary's concurrent letter to Billy Gray was carefully worded and almost apologetic—that his decision had been made having heard nothing from Derby and that he presumed the *Essex* must now be in a state to require the attention of a commander. "Captain Prebble will be well qualified to command her," Stoddert assured Gray, "and another Ship of equal force can be given to Captain Derby until an opportunity offers for his getting on board the *Essex*—I hope the arrangement will be perfectly agreeable to the Committee if I supposed otherwise, I certainly would not make it, but I fear that if we wait too long for Captain Derby, the Ship may not be ready before the frosts set in."

It would be dangerous to accuse Stoddert of playing the part of a canny diplomat when he may have acted without comprehending the extent of his shrewdness. In appointing Preble, he had kept the command of the *Essex* all in the family, for Preble and Derby were "brothers-in-law," or had been, twice over. Richard Derby's sisters Mary and Elizabeth both had been married to Preble's elder brother Ebenezer. Both women had since died.

Edward Preble was thirty-eight years old, tall, good looking, and hot tempered, yet fair-minded and a man deserving of respect despite his natural irascibility. As a youth he had received an education at Governor Dummer Academy alongside the salt marshes of Newbury, Massachusetts, but the Revolution being in full sway by the time he was in his mid-teens, he ran off to sea where in 1779 he had been made a midshipman aboard the Massachusetts State Navy frigate *Protector.* After numerous adventures, including capture and imprisonment aboard the *Jersey* prison hulk, he served in another Revolutionary cruiser as a lieutenant, and at war's end turned to the merchant service. When the possibility of war with France materialized early in 1798, he was taken into the new Navy with his old rank of Lieutenant and on 15 May 1799 was promoted to captain. A few months earlier, he had been offered the command of the frigate *Boston* which, for personal reasons, he had turned down.

The Secretary of the Navy's orders respecting the *Essex* reached Preble, after being redirected from Boston, at his home in Portland on 31 October, ten days after posting from Trenton, New Jersey, where Stoddert then was. Four days later, on 4 November, Preble was on his way to Salem.

Forewarned, Salem expected him. On the same day that old Fort William was rededicated as Fort Pickering—in honor of Timothy Pickering—Gray had announced the Secretary's appointment. If there was any feeling against his decision, it was not expressed. Preble arrived on the sixth of November. The following morning, accompanied by Joseph Waters, he was rowed out to the ship where he read himself aboard. "I found the Ship," he said, "moored between her two bowers in 5 fath^{s} water muddy bottom about half a league from the town, the flag staff on Fort Pickering bearing NE b E 3 Cables length dis^{t} Our dis^{t} off shore 2 Cables lengths from the spot on which the Ship was built, her Iron & Shingle ballast and part of her water on board, her masts & spars all in place rigged with her Standing and Most of her runing rigging, all the Joiners & much of the Carpenters Smiths & painters work to be done. Ordered the Top Gallant yards to be sent down."

Although the ship did not yet have a proper crew, she was not entirely destitute of men. During the middle of October, twenty men recruited for the ship *Connecticut*, in excess of her complement, had been turned over to the *Essex* through the offices of the Navy Agent at Boston. On taking command, Preble found these aboard under the command of Midshipman Thomas Randall. One of the crew had already deserted.

The appointment of the subordinate officers was not far advanced. As long ago as 5 September, Stoddert had informed Billy Gray that he might, whenever he thought it necessary, call into service a person to act as Third Lieutenant and such other inferior officers as he judged proper. "They will be named to the President and no doubt will be appointed—in the mean time their pay & Emoluments will go on from the commencement of their services. —These Officers may under your direction open a rendez-vous, and enter 50 or more men, to be employed in aiding the equipment of the Frigate.—Lieu^t^ Joseph Strout of Salem has been some time in the service—If you think proper you may imploy him in aid of the Lieu^t^ you mean to nominate.—The persons recruited should engage for one year from the time the Frigate hoists Anchor on a Cruise—they will however be paid from the time they are inlisted.—I have written to Cap^t^ Waters to employ such Men as you may recommend."

Waters, in replying, did little more than to agree with what Stoddert had said; nothing further was done at the time. "The Committee have not appointed a 2^d^ Lieu^t^ as you expected," Preble advised Stoddert on the day he assumed command, "neither do they contemplate nominating one. I am much in want of the assistance of the officers to attend to the Ship and the recruiting service, I shall be obliged to open a rendezvous tomorrow to recruit men sufficient to make the ship safe at her anchors in case of a Storm. I presume the *Essex* can be got ready for sea in thirty days if my recruiting instructions arrive soon, the Agent M^r^ Waters & the Committe are disposed to render me every assistance in their power &c . . . P.S. Since my return from the Ship this day I rec^d^ your letter of the 25^th^ and shall attend to it."

Stoddert had written both to Gray and to Preble on that date, requesting the former to "select suitable characters for the vacant stations of Commissioned and Warrant Officers" and politely chiding him for not having kept him informed of the ship's progress. To Preble, he had sent instructions respecting the officers.

> The Committee I presume have appointed a second Lieutenant, as they had permission to appoint one, and I have provided a Surgeon and Purser—Of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers, there remains therefore to be provided, One Lieutenant, One Surgeon's Mate, One Chaplain, One Sailing Master, One Boatswain, One Gunner, One Sailmaker, one Carpenter, and Twelve Midshipmen;—The President desires that you will consult with W^m^ Gray Esquire & the Com-

> mittee & get them to nominate suitable persons to fill these several stations, in time to admit of their receiving their Commissions & Warrants before the *Essex* sails—the Petty officers allowed you, are, Two Master's Mates, Two Boatswains Mates, 8 Quarter Gunners, 2 Carpenter's Mates, 1 Captains Clerk, 1 Yeoman of the Gun Room, 1 Cockswain, 1 Cooper, 1 Steward, 1 Armourer, 1 Master at Arms and 1 Cook: all of which you will appoint yourself in proper season—
>
> I rely with confidance upon your using every exertion to expedite the equipment and preparation of the *Essex* for sea: it being of every importance, that she should sail before the ice sets in.

In addition, he had ordered Lieutenant Richard C. Beale of Castine, Maine, to join the *Essex* as her First Lieutenant. Beale appeared on 8 November and was duly noticed in the subsequent issue of the *Salem Gazette*.

The other principal officers followed along regularly throughout the months of November and December: Surgeon Hector Orr of Bridgewater, Massachusetts; Purser William Mumford of Newport, Rhode Island; Lieutenant David Phipps of New Haven, Connecticut, whom Preble later characterized as worthy but too old for the service; Lieutenant George Gardner Lee of Salem; and, eventually, Sailing Master Rufus Low of Cape Ann, who had been employed on board by the Frigate Committee more or less in the capacity of ship keeper since about the twenty-fourth of September. Phipps, who had been told by Stoddert that he would not be the senior lieutenant on board but that it was not intended he should remain aboard any ship for long where he could not be, nevertheless was the man he proposed to act as the most junior lieutenant. Preble deftly avoided complications by recommending the appointment of Lee as Third Lieutenant, thereby elevating Phipps to Second.

A good deal of activity had been taking place in other quarters. The cannon, removed from their temporary mounts on the rising ground above the shipyard, had been carted down to Winter Island Wharf to be freighted out to the *Essex*. The gun carriages, made locally by Deacon James Gould, failed to pass Preble's inspection.

An anecdote concerning them survives, thanks to "Oliver Oldschool" who left the account of the composition of Biglow's doggerel in the *Salem Gazette* office. Preble, it must be pointed out, was still sleeping ashore because his accommodations on board were unfinished; the incident, therefore, took place at his lodgings.

> When Capt. Preble joined her the gun-carriages were not to his liking. "Who built those gun-carriages?" he exclaimed. "Deacon Gould." "Send for Deacon

> Gould to meet me at the Sun tavern this evening." Deacon Gould made his appearance in the same style that Dr. Franklin met George III, of that name. "What is your will Capt. Preble?" "You do not know how to make gun-carriages, sir!" "What's that you say, Captain Preble, I do not know how to make gun-carriages? I knew how to make gun-carriages before you were born, and if you say that word again I will take you across my knee and play Master Hacker [Isaac Hacker, a Salem schoolmaster] with you." The quick and fiery commodore found himself in a predicament, and the Deacon was equally quick and fiery, and thought best to drop the undignified contention.

The footnote to the anecdote is that Preble's journal for 17 November remarks: "Twenty six twelve pound Cannon were taken on board for the main battery, mounted them & found the Carriages all too high, dismounted the Cannon and sent the Carriages on shore to be altered."

Preble's survey of equipment aboard and in store prompted him to order a spare chain for the chain pumps from Jonathan Balch on the sixteenth of November. Hospital stores for the medicine chest came into view with the arrival several days later of the surgeon, Hector Orr, who was sent off to Boston on the twentieth, armed with a letter from Waters to Eliakim Morse, "merchant & druggist," at No. 6, Dock Square.

> This will be handed you by Doct^r^ Orr who I have recommended to call on you Respecting Medecines for the Ship *Essex*, & as I am inform'd you have put up Medicines for the other Government Ships, shall give you the prefence, provided that you will put them up, on the same terms you have for the *Congress* Frigate, & the Medicines meet the approbation of Doct^r^ Orr.

Although Stoddert had sent a long list of the recommended hospital stores long before, Orr and Morse together compiled an even longer one. Its contents, reproduced with the Surgeon's Indent in the Appendices, seem quite extraordinary to the modern eye. Orr reported to Waters the day after his arrival in Boston.

> I have seen the Surgeon of the *Congress* & have agreed upon my arraingement. I wish Cap^t^ Preble would Send me tomorrow morning the length, breadth, & height of the Cock Pit, that the chest may be made to suit it. It will take me untill the middle of next week be fore I can possibly get the chest completed & medicins put up. D^r^ Morse advises to have the chest left in town untill the *Essex* comes round, as there will be great hazzard in moving it, & that I ta[ke] to Salem such medicens as I shall want at present. In this particular be pleased to forward yr advise.

I must unavoidably go to Bridgewater before I return to Salem & my journey shall be urged with all possible expedition. If any of the crew should be sick, let a physician be employed in town at my expense.

The chest, notwithstanding Morse's objections, was freighted to Salem with other supplies from Boston before the middle of December, while additional medicines were acquired from Edward S. Lang, apothecary in Salem, and included:

2 lbs. Casscaril
1 lb. Lap calaminar
374 [units] Hinxh^{s} tinct cort
2 bottles 9-8 ung Saturnia
3 lbs. pulv cort per
4 oz. pulv rad columb
1 lb. sun glycertin[?]
2 lbs. Litharge
2 bottles of oil
6 lbs. cort peru

Edward Preble's report to the Secretary of the Navy on 21 November clearly demonstrates what had been done since he took command a fortnight before, as also it suggests the amount still to be done. His preoccupation with getting clear of Salem Harbor before ice set in had become more intense of late because the weather had turned unseasonably cold, and ice already had begun to form in nearby ponds.

I have the honor to inform you that Lieu^{t} Beals join'd the *Essex* the 8th Ins^{t} since which he has been uniformly attentive to the duties of his Office, Doct^{r} Orr, arrived here 19th Ins^{t} I have ordered him to Boston to attend to the Medicine chest preparing there, I have consulted the Committe in the nomination of the Warrant Officers whose names are mentioned on the inclosed return, they have all been well recommended and are now attending to their duty on board the Ship, it will be highly gratifying to them to receive their warants as early as you may think proper to forward them. Most of the petty officers are engaged, and If I had recruiting instructions I could man the ship in a few days by sending officers to the neighboring towns on that service. The *Essex* as I observed in my last letter has all her ballast and water on board, since which her masts spars & riging have been put in compleat order ready for bending sails at one hours notice. I took on board all her guns and mounted them last Monday, and in a few days shall have all our provisions and stores in, one Sloop load got along side to day, the Joiners have not yet finished all the rooms for the stores below but I expect they will in four or five days at the farthest. I think it will be best to remove the ship from this harbour to Nantasket roads as soon as she is ready for sea, as this harbor freezes much earlier than Boston, last year it was frozen up the last of November, and it is by no means at any time a convenient place for so large a ship as the *Essex*. the other two Lieu^ts^ and the purser are much wanted—as is a Sailing Master I shall forward you by the next mail the Names of a third Lieu^t^ and Sailing Master which the Committe wish to have appointed, and whose appointment will be very agreable to me. I wish you would order a 2^d^ Lieu^t^ from some of the ships that have lately arrived, one who has seen service—and can be depended on, on all occasions. The *Essex* mounts 26 Twelve pounders on her gun deck and ten 6 pounders on her Quarter deck, I think 9 pounders on her Quarter would be much better as she has room enough and is well able to bear them. I hope you will think proper to allow her compliment to be 250 Men & Boys, as she has 4 more guns than the *Boston* whose compliment was 220, and is considerably larger and heavier Masted & spared. A marine guard is now very necessary on board, and I have written to Cap^t^ Clark in Boston to forward me twenty or thirty if he has them recruited for this Ship, I have no doubt this measure will meet your approbation as it is intended for her safety. As you mentioned in your letter of the 25th Ul^t^ that it was important to have the *Essex* ready for sea & sail before the Ice sets in, and that you relied on my making use of every exertion in my power for that purpose, I shall continue to recruit men until I receive some orders to the contrary, and earnestly hope this will not be displeasing to you. It appears to me that the allowance of Muskets & pistols to this ship is not sufficient. I think 75 Muskets & 70 pair of pistols will be wanted in her. I beg leave to inclose you an Estimate of Provisions for 220 Men for 6 Months which was forwarded to the Agent here. Many mistakes were found in it which have been corrected the Butter is 900^lbs^ short and many other articles are considerably so. I feel confident that the *Essex* can be compleatly maned and ready for sea in twenty days at farthest.

Two days afterwards, Preble received orders from Stoddert, dated the fifteenth, pertaining to the service intended for the *Essex*. She must rendezvous with the frigate *Congress* at Newport, Rhode Island, by the fifteenth of December, there to take under convoy merchant ships bound for the East Indies and conduct them down to a certain latitude, as yet unspecified. In a separate letter to Billy Gray, he was more specific, mentioning the Equator. Both men were to spread the word around Salem in the event East Indiamen there cared to avail themselves of an escort. Other letters were circulated to other ports to make known the rendezvous date at Newport.

A second letter to Preble from the Secretary, under the same date, allowed him to initiate serious recruiting attempts.

The *Essex* under your command is allowed, Commissioned, Warrant, and Petty Officers agreeably to my letter of the 25 Ultimo

Sixty able Seamen
Seventy three ordinary Seamen
Thirty Boys
Fifty Marines, including Officers—

You will commence the recruiting business so as to admit of your complement being procured by the time the Ship is ready for Sea—

Able Seamen you will allow 17 D^{rs} per m^{o} and ordinary Seamen and Boys from 5 to 14 Dollars according to merit, all to be entered to serve one year from the Ships first weighing anchor on a cruise—The Marines will be supplied you by the Major of Marines—

You will allow the Recruits two months advance, but previously take care to obtain sufficient security to resort to in the event of desertion—

You will suffer none to enter but such as are sound and healthy, and permit no indirect or forcible means to be used to induce them to enter the service—

Every man entered must take an oath agreeably to the form you will Receive herewith—

Enclosed is the form of a Shipping paper wherein the name, station & pay of each person on board must be entered—I also enclose you the form of a pay roll, Muster Roll, form of a Bond to be Signed by the Sureties for the Seamen &^{c} all of which you will have kept with the utmost exactness.—

Six Thousand Dollars will be remitted you to effect this business, and should this sum prove insufficient you will apply to the Navy Agent for a further supply —You must advance to your Recruiting Officer, who will be allowed besides their pay and Rations, two dollars for each Recruit in full for every expence of Recruiting except in cases where they are Recruited at a distance where their provisioning and transportation to the Ship will also be allowed, but they must be Oconomical in their expenditures, for no extravagant charge will be admitted & no charge will be admitted without a proper Voucher to support it—

Immediately, the Salem rendezvous opened by Preble under his own authority on 12 November was supplemented by another in Boston under the direction of Third Lieutenant George Gardner Lee with yet another opened at Cape Ann early in December. The Boston rendezvous turned out to be a great disappointment; both the *Congress* and the Newburyport-built vessel *Warren* were enlisting men there as well.

By the end of November, with time fast running out, few men had taken the oath. A small detachment of Marines arrived from Boston, the remaining complement of which the Master Commandant of the Marine Corps had promised to provide at Newport.

There was one desertion at the end of the month. William Hackett, having nothing left to do in Salem, packed his belongings and went home to Salisbury.

NOTES

The firm of Hawkes & Babbidge consisted of Benjamin Hawkes and John Babbidge. Babbidge was born in 1767 and lived to the age of ninety-three. His wife was a Beckett; his son, the Reverend Charles Babbidge of Pepperell, Massachusetts. Hawkes was first a boatbuilder; then, during the mid-1790's, joined forces with Babbidge as sparmakers. In 1812, the firm built a thirty-two foot launch for the frigate *Chesapeake*, and from 1817 to 1823 built seven large vessels at their new shipyard below Daniels Street.

Richard Derby returned to the United States during the latter part of November 1799. He was back in Salem by 11 December when he hired one of Manning's horses to go to the fort on Winter Island to check on the *Essex*'s progress. On 4 December, he had written to Benjamin Stoddert, who replied from Philadelphia on the fourteenth. "Sir I am honored with your Letter of the 4th Instant— It is much regretted that your arrival in the United States had not happened at an earlier period, that your talents might have been sooner employed in the service of our common Country, and it affords me pleasure to add, that the President is highly gratified at your Acceptance of the Appointment as a Captain in the Navy of the United States & to assure you that an early opportunity will be embraced to afford you honorable employment. In the mean time you have permission to attend to your private business." Derby was finally commissioned in late February 1800. From November 1800, he commanded the twenty-four gun ship *Connecticut* until his resignation from the Navy on 8 May 1801.

Much of Edward Preble's correspondence with the Secretary of the Navy at this period is reproduced in *Naval Documents . . . Quasi-War*, op. cit., from the originals in the Preble Papers at the Library of Congress. A microfilm of the latter is in the library of the Peabody Museum.

Further correspondence in The *Essex* Papers regarding the additional chain for the chain pumps begins on 18 November with a letter from Jonathan Balch to Joseph Waters: "Last saturday Capt Prebble Called on me for a spare Chain for the Ship *Essex*'s Pump; I told him the Conversation I had with you respecting the Cost of the other Chain, and he wish'd me to go & see Mr Solomon Cotton, who is a very good workman at the Blacksmith buissness. I have been to him & he says he cannot make one till the week after next and that it will not exceed 25 Cents a pound. Capt Preble says the leather that is on the Chain which is on board the Ship is not stiff enough. I wish you to send me some English leather or let me know immediately if I am to get it as cheap as I can in Boston." Five and a half pounds were subsequently dispatched to Boston.

Balch again wrote to Waters on 7 December. "I have sent the spare Chain for the Frigate *Essex* to Messrs Thayer & Chapmans this Morning as I was directed and I think it is a very Good one—It may be & I believe it is rather too long, but it can be easily Shortened—I have been very uneasy lest I should not get it done as the Blacksmiths who are Capable of doing such work are so hurried with business I will send the Accounts as soon as I can get them."

His final communication to Waters was dated the twenty-third of December. "I have attended to the bussiness which you entrusted to my Care, & have endeavoured to do as well as was in my Power; I hope my endeavours will meet your approbation—you will see I have inclosed the various Bills which Amount to three hundred & ten dollars & 86 Cents M^{r} Cotton told me since he has made the Chain that it was a piece of work which he was not acquainted with, but as he had given his word that it would not cost more than 25 Cents a pound he has no demand for any more, but thinks that less than two shillings a pound would not be enough for such a piece of work. . . ."

CHAPTER 11

December 1799

"IF I live," Edward Preble had promised the Secretary of the Navy regarding the 15 December rendezvous at Newport, "and the elements are not against me, I am determined to surmount every other obstacle to effect this object."

Not only the elements but the frailties of human nature would thwart the best laid plans. The *Essex* would arrive at Newport almost two weeks behind schedule yet still be in time to join the *Congress*. Plans, meanwhile, had matured. The President had decided that the escorts should not be pulled away from the East Indiamen once they had crossed the Line, but they should continue all the way beyond the Cape of Good Hope to Batavia—modern Djakarta—"principally with the view of giving protection on the return voyage to a great number of vessels, and vast amount of property our Merchants will have to come from thence about May next," the merchants being apprehensive of dangers to the trade in that area. "A cruise to Batavia," wrote Charles W. Gouldsborough of the Navy Department to Preble, "may afford you an opportunity of boxing our Fraternal allies by a Quaker Squeeze."

Adams' decision raised additional logistical problems, not only for Waters and Preble but also for the Navy Department. For Stoddert, it meant throwing out complicated lines of procurement to the agents or correspondents at the principal ports, requesting vessels bound for Batavia to carry with them sufficient provisions to supply the frigates on their return passage. For Waters, in particular, it posed the problem of obtaining large additional quantities of provisions and slops for the outbound passage at extremely short notice. Extra muskets and pistols requested of Stoddert by Preble, at first denied, were promised to be made available for the *Essex* at Newport.

The question of slop clothing was perhaps the most difficult to answer in the time available. Both Preble and Purser William Mumford had been advised to turn to Waters for help. Waters had originally begun dealing for slops immediately following receipt of Stoddert's instructions in mid-October.

> In order to secure to the seamen an opportunity to purchase necessary clothing, without subjecting them to impositions by the pursers, Congress have directed that they shall, upon their request, be furnished with slops, the price of which shall

be deducted from their pay. You will, therefore, be pleased to furnish the Purser of the *Essex* with slops of the following descriptions, Shirts, Frocks, outer jackets, under jackets flan[nel drawers] Linnen or Woolen overalls, Shoes, Wool hats Blankets and Matrasses, a few of the latter, I presume will answer, not exceeding, in the whole, one of each of these articles, at a time, for every Man on board, marines excepted. You may, in consultation with the Captain and purser, determine on the quantity of slops necessary for the above supply, purchase them, if practicable, at wholesale, and deliver them over to the purser with an Invoice with the prices annexed, to which you add an per cent to secure the United States from losses: for as this arrangement is made purely to accommodate the seamen, and no profits contemplated, it is proper to guard against loss.

You will forward a duplicate of the invoice delivered to the purser to the accountant of this department that he may make proper charges against the purser. The original price, with the addition of 10 p^{r} cent, is the price at which these articles are to be delivered to the sailors.

In addition to these articles you will be pleased to furnish the purser with 10 watch coats to be given out to the sailors on watch in cold weather, at the discretion of the Captain. Other articles which will be wanted on board, by the sailors, may be supplied by the purser himself at his own risque and for his own emolument. The United States only provide necessaries.

Waters, having solicited information as to the source of the slops for the frigate *Boston*, made contact with John Hoffman, shopkeeper at 13 Ann Street, Boston, who began collecting enough clothing to fill the order. With the need for even more, arising from the change in the sailing orders, Hoffman found it difficult to supply enough. "It will be In my Powr to Furnish the Articles by the time," he wrote overoptimistically at first, "It will be more convenient for me to pack the Gurnsey Jackets in part as I shall have to purchase the Duck Capt [James] Sever [of the *Congress*] Called on me for Clothing wanted and gave the Gurnsey Jackets preference to the Duck as they would be Uniform I Packt for him two Hundread & fifty with other Clothing and if it will be Agreeable wish to Let me no by the Evening Stage."

Hoffman wrote back the next day. "You will receive by Mr Newell the Barrer what Clothing that has bean In my Power to Collect I have purchased Every Frock and Trows of Duck that I no of Sir I hope you will not think that I ment to Disappoint you When I Wrought you I Expected I Could collect from the Shops more then Was wanted Sir If you think It proper I can send the remainder round to Newp[ort] In one Small Box or if Capt Preb[le] thinks the gurnsy Frocks will answer the same purpose I will Send on Monday Morning One Hundred and fifty by the Morning Stage being all I have on hand."

Other sources around Salem were tapped for the extra clothing. All were delivered to the purser, with the addition of ten percent above the prime cost, for a total of $4,258.04. They consisted of the following articles:

Item	*Supplier*
200 checked shirts	John Hoffman
341 pair Russia duck trousers	" "
312 Russia duck jackets	" "
180 blue cloth jackets	" "
180 pair blue woolen trousers	" "
160 scarlet vests	" "
100 pair woolen drawers	" "
250 Russia duck frocks	" "
160 hats	" "
200 felt hats	Ward Pool
200 blankets	John Hoffman
100 mattresses	" "
10 watchcoats	" "
100 pair fine shoes	" "
100 pair coarse shoes	" "
100 pair coarse shoes	Abner Chase
100 pair fine shoes	" "
10 blankets	John Jenks

Deficiencies in these, or any other necessaries, Stoddert proposed should be supplied by Messrs. Gibbs & Channing at Newport. Waters, however, was determined that when the *Essex* left Salem Harbor she should be as complete in every respect as possible. To effect this end, he began to redouble his efforts to stir up the contractors who were dawdling over their work. Salem boatbuilder John Beckett, a distant relative of Retire Beckett, had already delivered the ship's boats, but John Tucker of Newburyport was proving unnecessarily slow in completing and shipping the oars. Hawkes & Babbidge, the local sparmaker firm, had yet to finish spare trestletrees, crosstrees, caps, studdingsail yards, mizzen boom, flying jibboom, and the spars for the four boats. It is unclear whether or not Buffum & Howard had yet delivered the boat sails.

The boats consisted of a twenty-eight foot longboat, built at $8 a foot,

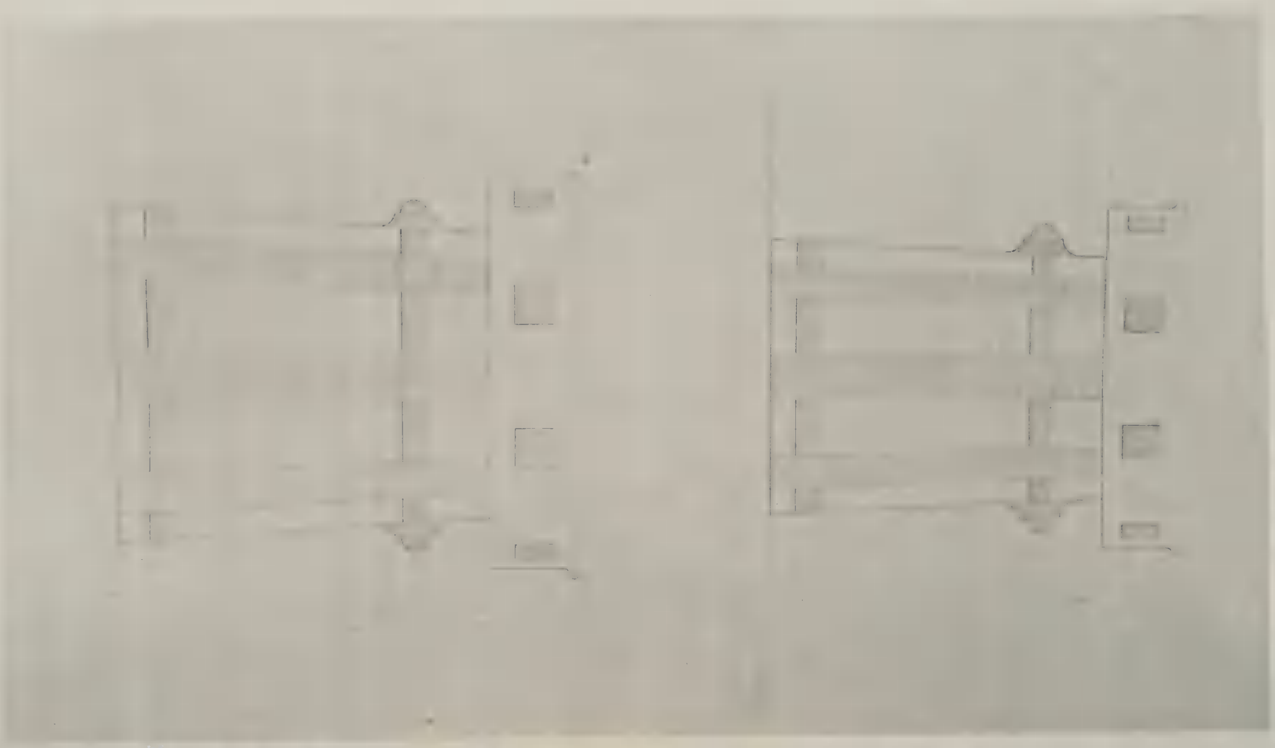


FIG. 54. Elevation drawing of the capstans of the *Essex* in 1809, from the Josiah Fox Papers. The dimensions accompanying the drawing are reproduced in the Appendices.

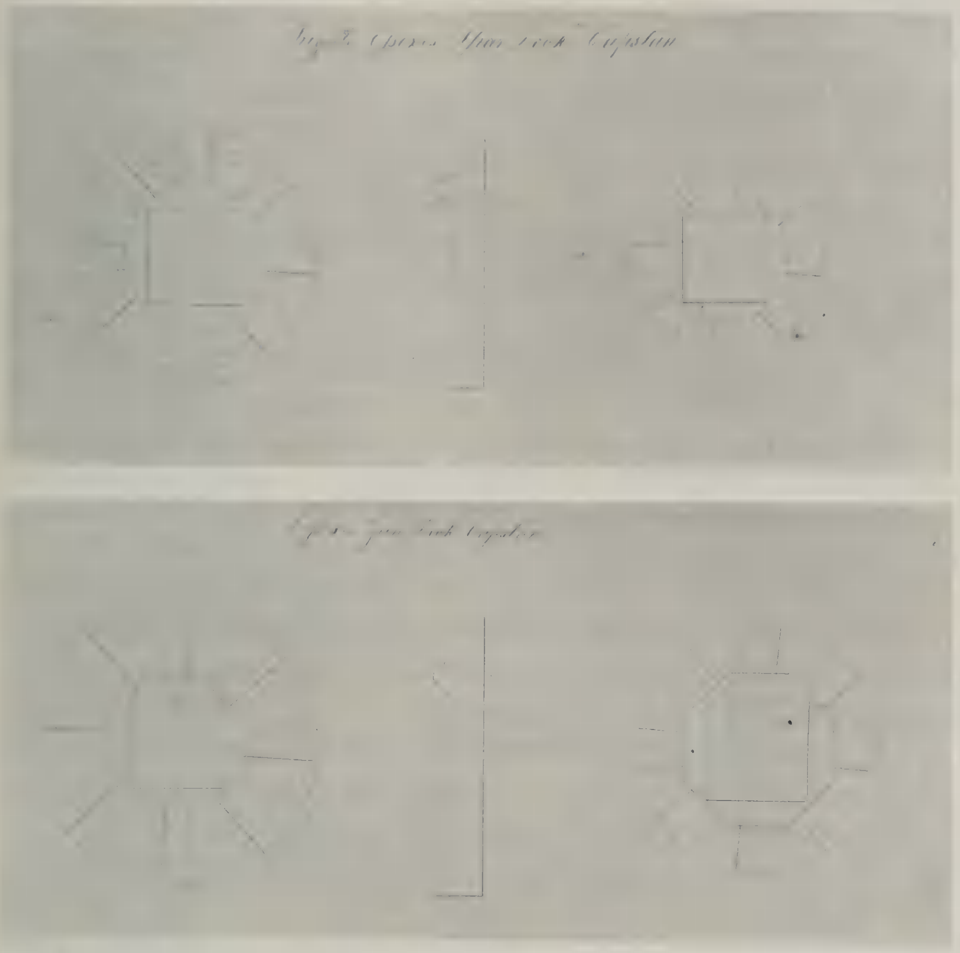


FIG. 55. Plan drawings of the capstans aboard the *Essex* in 1809, from the Josiah Fox Papers.

complete with mainmast, boom, bowsprit, gaff, and two suits of sails; a thirty-foot barge, at $7 a foot, with two masts, two sprits, and two suits of sails; a cutter, at $6 a foot, with two masts, yards, sprit, and two suits of sails; and a jolly boat—so-called by the boatbuilder but called the "yawl" by the sparmakers—of eighteen feet, at $4.44 a foot, complete with two masts, two sprits, and two suits of sails. Nothing whatever is known about their construction. The only boat visible in Joseph Howard's painting of the *Essex*, perhaps not even one of those built by Beckett, seems to be carvel-built and is colored white with a broad dark blue band between thin black stripes along the wales.

With Waters and Preble both cracking their whips during the first two weeks of December, matters proceeded at an acceptable level of performance. The last of the shingle ballast was taken on board, Thomas Briggs delivered the last of the cables and spare cordage, the final anchors from the Iron Factory and from Seth Brooks' blacksmith shop arrived on board, and, between intermittent storms of rain and snow, sloop loads of stores from the warehouses and from the chandlers in Boston were being discharged into the ship. There was no time for levity or any unnecessary distractions, as an errant visitor to the ship discovered to his discomfort. The *Salem Gazette* recorded the incident, but does not seem to have appreciated the very real pressures building among those concerned as 15 December loomed closer and closer on the horizon.

> A correspondent (whose name is with the printer) begs leave to caution his fellow-citizens against visiting the *Essex* Frigate (built by subscription by the inhabitants of the good old-fashioned town of Salem) as Mr. Winn, a worthy citizen of this town, was lashed to a gun, or the stairs, for a *few hours*, for the *monstrous* crime of going on board to look at her! and going between decks!—— It is just to add, that Capt. PLEBLE [sic] was not on board at the time.
>
> "Man! proud man, drest in a little brief autho-
> rity,
> Plays such fantastic *tricks*, as make e'en Angels
> weep."

Only one man was actively causing either Waters or Preble to have nightmares. We, like them, must for the moment turn our full attention to Benjamin Seymour of Plymouth and attempt to fathom why he still had not delivered the remainder of the shot. Seymour's silence since early August had become infuriating. Until late October, when forced by a communication from Waters to explain what he had been doing, no one had heard anything from him apart from one brief appearance in Salem on the fourth of September when he had bought from Ezekiel Hersey Derby on credit fifteen tons of "Swede iron."

On 18 October, Waters had written demanding immediate shipment of the double-head and grapeshot still wanting, threatening to procure them elsewhere if they were not instantly forthcoming. Seymour replied four days later, as always filled with well-groomed excuses.

> I received a letter this day, on your behalf respecting the Grape & Double head shot, from M^r Butler Dogherty [Fogerty], and am by no means surprised that you

are displeased at the delay; as they ought to have been in Salem several weeks ago, I hope no material inconvenience has been hitherto suffered, and will forward them to you directly the tedious delay, has been occasioned by the want of water, for the furnace has been twice obliged to stop, the shot are all in hand and will be compleat in a day or two, having plenty of water since the rains, great part of the shot for the *Congress* Frigate have been compleated this six weeks past, but the residue could not be finished on the same acco^{t} five days (only) were sufficient to make all the shot you were in want of as they can cast 25 Cwt Wt p^{r} day. part of the Grape & Cannister shot are at M^{r} Sigourney's store [in Boston] and 153 of the double head 12 lb shot. the rest shall be sent in a Plymouth Coaster to Boston and from thence to Salem, it would be a considerable loss to me to have the shot left on my hands, and am perswaded you will approve of them when they arrive. I am well aware that the Publick service supercedes every private consideration, and however I might personally suffer, would not impede the sailing of the Ship one hour, to render a benefit to myself. please to inform M^{r} H Derby, that the shot for the Portsmouth Ship are coming on, and he may be assured of receiving the amount of my note; but it is not possible for me to give an order till the amount or value can be called for with propriety by fulfilment of my contract.

With extraordinary self-confidence, if not to say gall, Seymour had just offered to furnish shot for yet another vessel, the *Warren*, built at Newburyport. It is an unfortunate circumstance that Waters probably had no knowledge of this further proof of Seymour's penchant for spreading himself too thin. Neither does he appear to have realized that Seymour's shot were cast in furnaces in New York State, not in or around Plymouth; otherwise, he might have had greater reason to doubt Seymour's ability to supply them in time.

"I received your fav^{r} of the 22nd Ult^{o} informing me that the whole of the Shot, wou'd be Compleated in a day or two, but have received only 152 Double headed Shot [from Sigourney]," Waters pressed him on 5 November, "—The Ship being in Such forwardness, that a further delay in not procuring the Shot, wou'd be attended with disagreeable consequence therefore must urge a compliance with your Contract, without any further delay, or else must procure them elsewhere—Your answer by return of the Post will oblige. . . ."

Seymour's reply on the seventh said nothing new; the delay being "equally unlookt for, and unavoidable; the cause originating from the excessive drought in the summer and by no means from any neglect." To give him his due, Seymour's intentions probably were good, but he was not entirely his own master. Although he made the molds, his subcontractors cast the shot. Where he was specifically to blame was in overextending himself without being sufficiently straightforward to admit it or to tell the whole truth about his various troubles.

Charles Sigourney, Jr. in Boston, of whom Waters made inquiries, was unable to help further because what shot he had in hand had been promised to the *Congress.* Waters may have breathed easier when Ezekiel Hersey Derby told him on 22 November—"fearing you may purchase it otherways" —that he had just seen Jacob Sheafe who had assured him he knew from his own knowledge that the shot for both the *Congress* and the *Essex* were ready and were "coming on immeadiately." But, when they had not arrived within the week, Waters marched up to Richard Manning, Jr.'s stable above Union Wharf on Saturday, 30 November, hired a horse and express rider, and packed them off to Plymouth with the most stinging rebuke he had yet penned to Seymour.

> There is now elapsed twenty three days, & no Shot arrived, & am at a loss to account for your conduct in this Business.
>
> I send an express to inform you, that the Ship is now under Sailing orders & must leave this place the 10th of next month, therefore must request youll inform me by Return of the Bearer, what I have to depend on from you, whether there is any part of the Shot ready & what kinds, that can be Shipp'd immediately for this place, for shou'd their be any deficiency on your part must on return of the Bearer, who is to meet me on Monday next in Boston, purchase it, on the best terms I can, & must charge you with any difference, that may arise in the price, & that contracted with you for . . . PS I must assure you that I feel very unhappy from the disappointment I have met with from you.

With the express rider confronting him, Seymour had no choice but to answer at once. "Your favor, by the bearer of this," he wrote, "I received and can hardly offer an excuse. your shot have been ready this two months, wind only at present prevents your receiving them, as they are all on board the vessell I mentioned in a former letter. the residue of the shot for the *Congress* are detained here on account of a head wind. the knowledge of their being ready has in some measure lessened the anxiety I felt till they arrived; and I feel myself reprehensible that any uneasiness should have been suffered by disappointment, occasioned by want of a ready conveyance there is the full quantity you ordered, and I hope in 48 hours, I shall be with them at Salem."

He would not be. The express rider left Plymouth on Sunday for Boston, and on Monday morning Waters rode to Boston to meet him. Seymour was en route to Boston, also, aboard one of the "wind-bound" vessels which lay all night off the Gurnet Lighthouse in company with a schooner loaded with shot. They were not destined for Salem.

About sunset the next day, Tuesday, 3 December, the sloop bearing Seymour and the schooner carrying his shot anchored in Boston Harbor not far from where the *Congress* was moored. By Wednesday noon, boats began delivering shot to her. That evening Seymour went into Boston. On Friday, after having dined in the wardroom of the *Congress*, he began to weigh the shot he had just delivered. He slept aboard that night. On Saturday and Sunday, he was similarly occupied. Then, on Monday, 9 December, he went ashore in the *Congress*' barge and spent the day in Boston calculating the weight of his shot and writing out bills.

In Salem, Joseph Waters was frantic, and Preble had become quite disheartened, writing to Stoddert on the sixth that despite

> having made every exertion in my power I find it impossible to get the *Essex* ready for sea in less than ten days after the time I at first expected Owing to the state of the weather and many disappointments yesterday was a violent snow storm

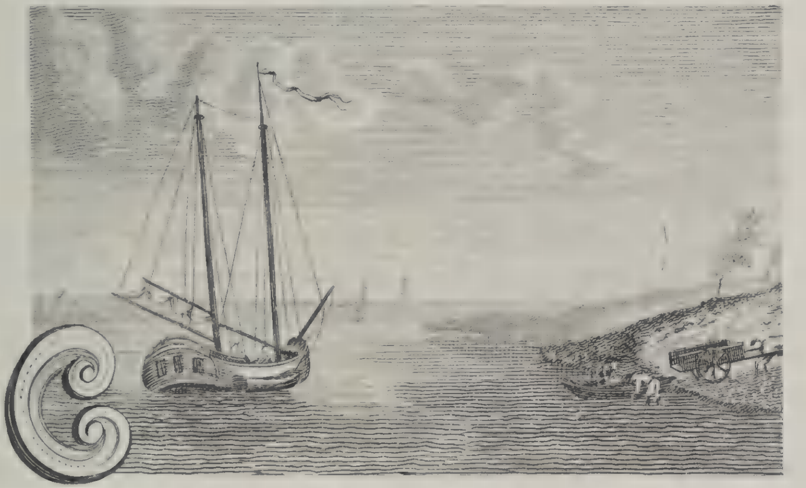


Fig. 56. A Salem schooner taking aboard a cargo from shore. From the membership certificate of the Salem Marine Society, 1797.

and to day rain. Our Canister & grape shot has not yet arrived from Plymouth altho it has been shipped several days, our Coals, Butter, Rice, Medicine Chest, Chains for our chain pumps, hospital-stores, part of our lanterns and many other articles are yet to come from Boston some of which are not yet ready, and if they were it is probable from the present state of the weather that the wind will not admit of the packet reaching here for several days to come; six thousand weight of Bread is yet to be Baked, and I am eighty men short of my compliment, which with the forty men at Newport makes 120 short. I presume it will not be prudent at this inclement season of the year to go to sea so short of my ships company & the ship not compleatly ready to encounter the various changes of wind [and] weather now so frequent on this coast. It is impossible to calculate what time the *Congress* will reach Newport if she sails the 10th as I suppose she will for it is not uncommon for mercht vessels at this season to have 15 or 20 days passage. A wind proper for sailing from Boston through the channel is directly contrary for Newport, after passing Nantasket Shoals—The Merchs here will not send any vessels to join the Convoy as they calculate the sea Risk to N. Pt equal to the risk of capture from this to the Cape of Good Hope. I do not think it possible neither does the agent or the Committe that the ship can sail before the 20 Inst I am extremely concerned that this is the case but beg leave to assure you that every thing has been done on my part which it has been possible for me to do, and every exertion shall still continue to get her ready before that time if possible. Lieut Phipps has been confined to his birth since his arrival in consequence of indisposition. I think he will be a valuable officer and regret the loss of his services at this busy period. Lieut Beals is attentive on board & Lieut Lee is recruiting at Boston several Midshipmen are on the same service at this & the neighboring towns . . . If it is important that I should be at New port to join the Convoy I think it is possible that I may reach there before the fleet sails if I leave this by the 20th but any rate I can join them at the Cape de Verd Islands if they leave there New port before that time if you think proper to give me orders for that purpose.

On 11 December, Preble was again writing to Stoddert. The vessels expected from Boston with the shot and stores had not yet reached Salem, but that carrying the latter "it is probable will be here to night, as She was to sail this morning." Seymour was writing to Waters at the same time. It was a longer epistle than usual, but it at least had the virtue of finally getting down to the causes of his numerous difficulties.

"I am concerned that you have sufferd the least uneasiness respecting the shot, which have been lying here above 10 days," he began with familiar rhetoric. "Presume you are informed they are on board a Salem Coaster." His shot, it developed, had been attached by Martin Brimmer, his one-time associate in the tin plating business at Plymouth, to force payment in a note previously pledged to Brimmer's father-in-law, an attachment which had been occasioned, according to Seymour, "by a desire of gratifying his [Brimmer's] revenge" for a lawsuit he had brought against Brimmer for nonpayment of the latter's debts. The whole business had become exceedingly complex and, from a modern point of view, ill-defined. In essence, what appears to have happened respecting the shot for the *Essex* was that Seymour had become indebted to Ezekiel Hersey Derby for the fifteen tons of "Swede iron" purchased on credit the previous September. Until paid, Derby at least theoretically still owned the iron or the value of the shot manufactured from it, despite the attachment. Waters had promised to pay Derby the amount for the shot, thereby paying Seymour by wiping out his debt to Derby, Seymour's profit being calculated into the transaction.

The shot from Seymour never materialized but had to be supplied from other sources, through the intervention of Derby. It arrived alongside the *Essex* in a coaster from Boston on the twelfth of December. Seymour, himself, suddenly materialized in town two days afterwards. The following day, and the next, he spent on board weighing the shot to calculate the extent of his continued indebtedness to Derby. He decamped from Salem on Monday, 16 December, having had at least two interviews with Waters, the gist of which, luckily perhaps, went unrecorded.

Benjamin Seymour's subsequent behavior did little to improve his image in Waters' eyes. He would complain about the final settlement; that "the wresting 15 dollars from my family" would "not benefit the Government of the United States." He would chide Waters for not dealing with him on the same financial footing as Jacob Sheafe had done, forgetting his own solicitations at the "lowest offers" the previous spring "rather than let the occasion slip." Finally, he would whine spitefully: "pardon me for noticing a report current in Boston that all persons who contracted for the completion, or equipment of the *Essex* Frigate, have uniformly been losers from the very low rates at which the contracts have been made."

"You must be sensible," Waters would answer him with gentlemanly restraint, "that it was incumbent on me to purchase it [the shot] on the best terms I cou'd . . . had the Shot been supplied agreeable to contract, there wou'd have been no failure on my side." Once arrived at Newport, Messrs.

Gibbs & Channing would supply the *Essex* with 400 twelve-pound shot. By a strange quirk of fate, they proved to be Seymour shot!

There was not much left to do, now. Much of Waters' time during the final week was spent satisfying demands sent ashore either by the First Lieutenant or by Purser William Mumford, all for items in short supply aboard—varnish, steel scrapers, green baize, wooden measures, tar brushes, tools, hand pumps, scales, candles, twine, and more axes and cleavers to cut up the beef, there being but one axe on board and that belonging to the cook. "Procure immediately Six brass Cocks with Keys to be immediately sent on board as there is a great waste of Spiritts in drawing without a Cock." The harbor supplies of rum were running out. The wardroom wanted brown sugar and poultry. More beef and mutton and bread were needed as harbor provisions because Mumford had been forced to broach barrels intended for sea stores.

"I very well know that no part of the Ship's Stores are to be touch'd while in Port," Mumford snapped after a scolding from Waters, "but it has been sometimes unavoidable; & great allowances ought to be made for my Situation; having business to attend to on board & on Shore & having no Steward." When the steward showed up, Mumford may have regretted his impatience, for the man described himself as "A broken Clergyman" who "having served out spiritual things" was "now employed about carnal things."

On 14 December, Preble closed the rendezvous at Salem, Boston, and Cape Ann, his complement being nearly full if the Marines awaiting the ship at Newport were counted in. Throughout the day, a sloop continued to discharge a motley assemblage of items acquired from Thayer & Chapman, ship chandlers in Boston. A pilot for Newport came aboard to prevent unnecessary delays in sailing.

Lieutenant Lee returned from the Boston rendezvous the next day. Between 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning; an order was given to send up the topgallant yards, loosen the fore-topsail, and fire a gun—the signal for all officers to repair immediately on board. Another sloop was discharging, even though it was the Sabbath, this time with stores intended for the Captain and wardroom. This was the day that Stoddert had wanted the *Essex* to be in Newport.

"The *Essex* still remains here," Waters wrote to him on Monday the sixteenth, "owing in a great measure to the repeated rain & Snow Storms, but little remains to be done now, having only her powder to go on board, which wou'd have been this day, if the Snow had not prevented it." At nine o'clock in the morning, the wind had been out of the fair weather direction, northwest. Preble had made another signal for sailing, but during the morning the wind had begun to move into the northeast, bringing with it heavy snow off the sea. The signal of the loosed fore-topsail remained until dusk when it was reefed and handed.

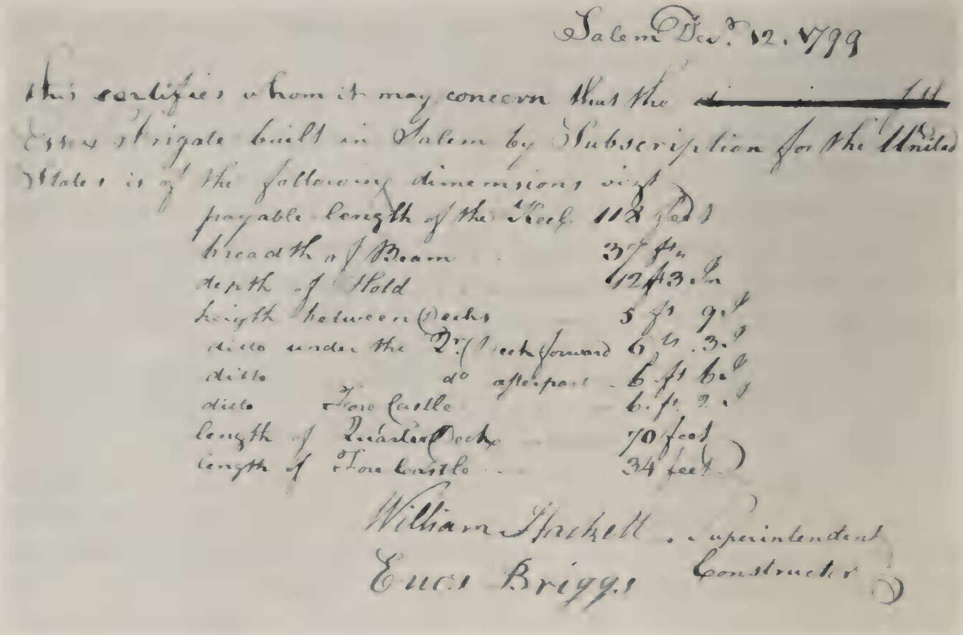
The weather was no better at dawn and failed to moderate during the day, the wind hanging between NNE and ENE, laden with snow. It was this day, Tuesday, that the Frigate Committee relinquished its claim to the *Essex*, ceding her formally to the United States.

> The Committee for building a Frigate in Salem for the United States, having delivered to my charge the said Frigate, called the *Essex*, with her hull, masts, spars and rigging complete, and furnished me with one complete suit of sails, two bower cables and anchors, one stream cable and anchor, one hawser and kedge anchor, one tow line, four boats and a full set of spare masts and spars except the lower masts and bowsprit. I have, in behalf of the United States, received the said Frigate *Essex*, and signed duplicate receipts for the same.
>
> Edward Preble
> Salem, Dec. 17, 1799 Capt. U.S.N.

By Wednesday morning, the weather turned fair with the wind again blowing out of the northwest, whereupon Joshua French began carting the 87½ barrels of gunpowder from the powder house to be freighted out to the ship. Still the wind moved around the compass, and by the time the last of the powder had been stored below in the magazine the air had become heavy with more snow. With the last load of hardware, smith work, staves, cordage, and spare pieces of timber collected from Enos Briggs' Stage Point yard coming aboard, the officers completed their indents and sent copies ashore to Waters. Before the weather closed in entirely, Preble dismissed the last of the joiners, carpenters, smiths, and painters still working aboard and hoisted in the boats.

Thursday was a dead loss—more of the same. Friday was little better as snow and rain continued during the early hours of the morning. Then the wind began to shift toward the NNW, and at 9 A.M. the fore-topsail was loosed again and a gun fired for sailing, but early in the afternoon the wind died down into faint puffs. Preble fretfully took the occasion to write to Captain James Sever of the *Congress*, telling him he was riding to a single anchor and was only awaiting a favorable wind for sailing.

On Saturday morning, after light flurries of snow, he got it—northwest.



Salem Decr. 12. 1799

this certifies whom it may concern that the ~~[illegible]~~ Essex Frigate built in Salem by Subscription for the United States is of the following dimensions viz

payable length of the Keel	112 feet
breadth of Beam	37 ft
depth of Hold	12 ft 3 in
heigth between Decks	5 ft 9 in
ditto under the Qr. Deck forward	6 ft 3 in
ditto do afterpart	6 ft 6 in
ditto Fore Castle	6 ft 2 in
length of Quarter Deck	70 feet
length of Fore Castle	34 feet

William Hackett . . Superintendent
Enos Briggs Constructor

FIG. 57. The formal certificate of the *Essex*'s dimensions, signed by Enos Briggs and William Hackett, in The *Essex* Papers.

At 9 A.M., the signal was made for sailing. The *Essex* hove short on her small bower, but no amount of effort could weigh the anchor. It had fouled and could not be cleared. Two new messengers and a buoy rope were parted in the attempt. Preble sent an urgent message ashore to Thomas Briggs.

> Two messengers of 10½ Inches and thirty seven fathoms each is immediately wanted on board this ship. I wish you to have them made of the very best of yarns so that I can have them on board this evening by 5 oClock, as we have parted what we have on board and the best end of our stream cable which we have used for a messenger.

At 3 P.M., the small bower was finally weighed. The best bower was dropped and the *Essex* veered out to it.

Finally, after a week of mounting frustration, she sailed. At 6 A.M. on Sunday, 22 December 1799, all hands were called to man the capstan and shake out the sails. At 8, the anchor broke the surface, and the *Essex* squared away with a quartering WNW breeze out through the mouth of Salem Harbor. On passing Fort Pickering and the deserted meadow on Winter Island from which she had been launched, she fired a salute of sixteen guns, which was acknowledged from the fort. An hour later, safely out into the ship channel, she hove to to put the harbor pilot ashore, hoisted in the cutter, and filled away to sea, accompanied by the Crowninshield's ship *Belisarius*, which had timed her departure to coincide with that of the *Essex* to test the latter's mettle.

The *Salem Gazette* reported the departure of the *Essex* with fitting tribute to a hitherto unsung principal in the history of her building.

> The frigate *Essex*, Capt. PREBLE, sailed from this harbour, on Sunday morning, for Newport. She fired a salute on going out, which was returned from fort Pickering. She sailed remarkably well; and, from the abilities of her officers and crew, we anticipate a successful cruise.
>
> The late period at which the appointment of officers to this ship was made must naturally have retarded her preparations for sea, had not Capt. WATERS, the Naval Agent, supplied, as far as the powers of one man could extend, all deficiencies. To his uncommon exertions, of which we have heard Capt. Preble speak in the strongest terms, it is owing that she is not longer detained in port.

NOTES

After being refused by the Government in 1798, the Crowninshield's ship *Belisarius* sailed from Salem on 13 September 1798, commanded by Captain Benjamin Crowninshield, for Copenhagen and returned to Salem on 16 January 1799. She was reregistered on 20 May, and, under Captain Edward Allen, made a voyage to Surinam, entering Salem in August. Again she was reregistered, departing from Salem under Captain Samuel Skerry, Jr. for Teneriffe on 25 September 1799. The purpose of this voyage was to buy wine for reexportation to the East Indies, but credit being refused, Skerry turned around and came home. "On the 26th Nov. we arrived at Salem, very much to the surprise of our Employers and Friends." Again under Skerry, the *Belisarius* sailed from Salem Harbor in company with the *Essex* but once out to sea shaped her course independently toward Ceylon.

CHAPTER 12

Epilogue

WHEN the frigate *Essex* and the ship *Belisarius* left Salem in company, old George Crowninshield's penetrating gaze never left them until their mastheads had dipped below the horizon. He saw what he wanted to see.

"The *Belsarius*," he wrote to his son John, "Sailed Sunday last in Company with our Famous Frigate & with a fare Tryall the BS [*Belisarius*] Beet her they Each went about 10 knots the BS was Deep & Drew 30 Inches abaft More than Forwar & her Old Sales. . . ."

The *Essex* was deep-laden, too. Captain Edward Preble's judgment of her performance did not wholly agree with what George Crowninshield thought he saw. He described his reactions to Waters in a letter written from Newport on 29 December, two days after his arrival there. "I beg leave to acquaint you that the *Essex*, with two reefs in each topsail and foresail sailed as fast as the *Belisaurias* with top and top gallant studding sails set. Capt. West's ship was so far astern that I could not so well judge of her sailing, but it appears to me this ship with the same sail set with either of the two would sail six miles to their four . . . The *Essex* is a good sea-boat, and sails remarkably fast. She went eleven miles per hour, with top gallant sail set and within six points of the wind."

He was less expansive with the Secretary of the Navy, but Waters made up for it, paraphrasing Preble's remarks and adding that "from this Account from Cap^t Preble I presume the *Essex* will bee one of the fastest Sailing Ships on the Ocean; itt is well Ascertaind that the *Bellasarius* is one of the fastest Sailing Ships beelonging to this poart—She is a Copperd Ship & was only in Balest Trim When Shea Sailed from hear with the *Essex*—the *Essex* deep—having three of her beends under water, When Shea Left this poart—This affourds us hear a great deal of pleashure to find the *Essex* excels in Sailing."

To William Hackett, Waters wrote much the same thing. "This I think will Aford You Agreat Deall of pleasure As it Does the Gentlemen of the Committe hear, & Your humble Servant. . . ."

During her passage toward the Cape of Good Hope, the *Essex* encountered severe gales which caused the newly set-up rigging to stretch. Lines were continually parting. "I find all our rigging too small," Preble complained at sea, "of a very bad quality, and not to be depended on. Our iron work is equally bad, and both are constantly giving away." These, and other faults in the tophamper, plagued the ship for some time, but eventually matters were put to rights. The hull had never been a cause for complaint, as demonstrated in a letter sent to Waters by Purser William Mumford after the *Essex*'s return to the United States.

> The *Essex* has been much admir'd at all the Ports we touch'd at: in the Cape of Good Hope, she was visited by the Navy Officers generally, who all agreed in pronouncing her to be the most complete & beautiful Frigate they ever saw, and one of the Officers observ'd to the Capt. if you will build such handsome Frigates you must not think hard that so many Officers come on board to look at her; and as to her sailing, she has beat every Vessel she has ever had a Tryal with: —we sail'd from the Cape of Good Hope in Company with the *RattleSnake* Sloop of War, commanded by a Son of Admiral Sir Roger Curtis. She got under way at the moment we did, for the express purpose of beating us, but to their great Mortification we ran her Hull down in about four Hours; and when we arriv'd in the Straits of Sunda, we had a fair tryal with the *Arrogant* a 74 and the *Orpheus* Frigate; two of the fastest sailing Vessels in the British Navy, and we beat them above one half; we pass'd the *Arrogant* so close, that Capt. Osburne look at us out of his Quarter Gallery with a Degree of Astonishment & observed to Capt. Preble that she was the fastest sailing Vessel he ever met with.

* * *

It is outside the intended scope of this book to go into the subsequent career of the frigate *Essex* in any great detail. Much of it is already well published and well known, but a brief summary is given here for those who do not have access to the principal published sources. Particular emphasis is laid upon her refit of 1807–1808 and upon her inglorious end as a prison-hulk at Dun Loaghaire, Dublin Bay, Ireland, the details of which, to the knowledge of the author, have not been previously enumerated.

Leaving Salem, the *Essex* shaped a course for Newport, Rhode Island, where she joined the frigate *Congress* on 27 December 1799. Both, accompanied by a small fleet of East Indiamen, sailed for Batavia on 7 January 1800, but within a week of their departure heavy gales scattered the convoy. It was not known to Preble for many months afterwards that the *Congress* had been dismasted and, under jury rig, had limped back to the United States for refitting. Thus, the *Essex* was on her own.

She crossed the Line exactly one month after sailing from Newport and anchored off Cape Town on 11 March 1800. After watering and repairing the damage sustained in the gales, she pushed on around the Cape of Good Hope, thereby acquiring the honor of becoming the first United States naval vessel to accomplish this feat. On 7 May 1800, she hauled around Java Head into the Sunda Straits, continuing on to Anjier and Batavia. In mid-June, she gathered the return convoy of American merchant ships, left Batavia, and doubled the Cape of Good Hope on 27 August. After a sixteen-day call at St. Helena to allow time for the scattered convoy to reassemble, she set sail for the United States, coming to anchor in New York Harbor on 29 November 1800. Shortly after her arrival, the greater part of her crew was discharged, their enlistments having expired. A skeleton force of officers and crew remained aboard, and Preble went home to Portland.

By the early part of the year 1801, the Quasi-War with France had largely subsided. In March, a number of the ships acquired by purchase, contract, or popular subscription, deemed unfit for further service, were prepared to be sold out of the Navy, but the *Essex* survived as one of the thirteen frigates selected for retention. Meanwhile, conditions with the Barbary Powers had again deteriorated, leaving American commerce in the Mediterranean open to spoliation.

Preble was called back into service on the first of April 1801, but, when ill-health obliged him to decline further command at that time, the Secretary of the Navy appointed Captain William Bainbridge to the *Essex*. Sailing with a fleet consisting of the *President*, *Philadelphia*, *Essex*, and schooner *Enterprise*, all under the command of Commodore Richard Dale, Bainbridge arrived at Gibraltar with the squadron at the beginning of July. Throughout the following year, the *Essex* was regularly employed along both the African and European shores of the Mediterranean to collect American merchantmen and to escort them safely out through the Strait of Gibraltar.

By May 1802, it was apparent that she needed repair and refitting; she accordingly sailed from Gibraltar on 16 June and arrived at New York on the twenty-third of July. In early August, she was laid up in ordinary at the Washington Navy Yard. During the next year or year and a half she underwent periodic, but apparently minor, repairs, details of which are unavailable because the records were destroyed when the yard was burned by the British in 1814.

News that the frigate *Philadelphia* had been captured after grounding at the entrance to Tripoli harbor prompted the outfitting during the spring of

1804 of the *Essex*, under the command of Captain James Barron, and the *President*, *Constellation*, and *Congress*, all to reenforce the existing United States naval forces in the Mediterranean. This fleet, under Commodore Samuel Barron, sailed from Hampton Roads on 4 July 1804 and reached Gibraltar on 12 August. The *President* and *Constellation* proceeded to show the flag off Tripoli for a few weeks before contrary winter gales retired them to winter quarters at Malta, while the *Essex* and *Congress* were detached to Tangiers to prevent the Emperor from refitting his cruisers. The *Essex* spent the winter cruising the Mediterranean. In late May 1805, with United States peace negotiator Tobias Lear on board, she appeared off Tripoli under a flag of truce. Conditions for peace being unacceptable to Lear, negotiations stagnated temporarily, but a peace was signed on board the *Constitution* on 10 June 1805. Throughout the ensuing year, the *Essex* was employed to prowl the Mediterranean. She had a succession of commanding officers during this time—George Cox, Charles Stewart, Hugh G. Campbell, and John Rodgers. Under Rodgers, she sailed for home in June 1806 and arrived in the Potomac River before the end of July. She was again laid up in ordinary at the Washington Navy Yard until February 1809. During that time she underwent extensive repairs.

Although the yard books do not seem to have survived, much is known about these repairs thanks to the voluminous papers in the Peabody Museum of Salem of Naval Constructor Josiah Fox. Their content with respect to work done on the *Essex* is worth recounting in some detail because of its bearing upon her original construction, how she was altered, the specific dimensions from the Fox Papers reproduced in the Appendices, and the reconstructed draughts accompanying this volume.

The preliminary surveys to determine her condition appear to have begun in May 1807 after receipt of the necessary authorization from the Secretary of the Navy. At that time, the ceiling was being "principally removed" where most decayed. By 3 June it had been noted that she would need seventy-five replacement lower futtocks and other work, as specified below.

Fore and After Platforms having been cut and much worn, have been taken up
Fore and Mizen Steps, rotten
2 larboard Hawse pieces, rotten in their Heels
4 Transom Sleepers, rotten
The Ceiling in the Hold, partially, was cheifly rotten, particularly in the Magazine, Filling-room, Bread and Sail-rooms

Transoms and Fashion pieces, all rotten

3 Lower Breasthooks, partially defective

Several of the Lower and Gun deck Beams are partially defective, their number not yet ascertained now under examination, but cannot be effectually known, untill the decks are taken up

Lower deck Planks from frequent Scraping and clensing are so much worn, as to require shifting

Gun-deck Planks: very much worn and patched, will require considerable repair

Quarter-deck and Fore Castle Plank will require some repairs

Quarter deck beams, much sunk, from the Stansions of the Cabin having been kept out—

The filling between the Ports, within boards, very defective, as well as some parts of the Clamps &c, some defective places have been discovered in the black Strakes and Wales—

Toptimbers are in many places defective

It is thought unnecessary to enter into all the minutiae of the defects at this time —Therefore this general View of the principal defects are only given—

Despite an impression of extensive decay, Fox reported on 6 June 1807 that the greater part of her frames were good; the stem, sternpost, and bottom planking in apparent good order wherever examined; and the greater part of her topside sound. As a consequence, he was convinced that the expense of repairs would not equal the cost of a new ship and that she could be placed in a state equal, if not superior, to her condition when first built. "The White Oak Timber and Plank with which this Ship was built," he continued his report, "is Superior in quality to any White Oak, I have seen made use of in the Navy—It appears to have been cut from Trees, young and Thriving."

Consequently, repairs began and continued from midsummer well into the autumn. By mid-November 1807, those areas that were under water had been nearly completed and recoppered. Work nearly ceased temporarily just before Christmas to transfer the majority of carpenters to expedite the rebuilding of the *John Adams*.

In January 1808, nevertheless, sufficient work was still in progress upon the *Essex* for Fox to begin raising questions about modifications in her original design. As the work had progressed to the point where it would become necessary to arrange her upper works, he wondered whether her mode of armament were to continue as before. The suggestion had been made that the form of her top timbers be altered, for "at present they tumble Home

(Housing) too much." As most of the top timbers would have to be removed, this would be the time to improve them. "All the Fore Castle and quarterdeck Ports in our Frigates (the *Chesapeak* excepted) are equally Spaced between the Ports on the Gun-deck; This mode (though uniform) is attended with great disadvantage to the direction of those Guns, particularly Carronades, where the Ports are in the wake of the Channels; It is usual with all Nations to place their Fore Castle and quarter deck Ports in their Frigates between the same Shrouds that are spaced for the Main deck Ports, by which means the shrouds have less spread fore and aft and being more abreast of the Mast, afford more support to the Masts than they now do: and at same time enable the Guns to range clear of the shrouds, and point to more advantage than in the former mode. . . ."

What was finally done to the *Essex* was explained by Fox in a later report, dated 5 June 1809.

> When the Frigate *Essex* was repaired, upwards of 90 of her lower Futtocks being found rotten were taken out and replaced with Live Oak most of the other parts of the Frame, as also her Transoms, Fashion pieces, Counter Timbers Hawse pieces were also shifted, and replaced with Live Oak and Red Cedar, the whole of the Decks and Beams together with Knees are also new, as well as the Top, Sides, wales, and many Planks of the Bottom—The only alterations made in the Hull, were raising the Wales and thick strakes, increasing the size of the Gundeck Ports 2 Inches—shortening the Rake of Counter, and Settleing the Lower Deck from 2 to 4 Inches, giving a Tier of Air Ports fore and aft, and leaving passages for the admission of Air to various parts of her Frame, Her Topside was raised with 9 Inches less Housing on a Side.

On the twentieth of January 1809, the condition of the *Essex*'s hull was described as being in as good order as the day she was launched. She could be rigged and prepared for sea within a few weeks if necessary. By the last of May, she had been recommissioned and was at Norfolk, Virginia, "officered, manned, victualled and in other respects prepared for service."

During the latter part of 1810, her official station was in Hampton Roads, but in November of that year she had been sent off to Europe under Captain John Smith, bearing dispatches relating to the deteriorating conditions with Great Britain. The *Essex* was on soundings off the French coast eighteen days after her departure from Cape Henry, and on 4 December 1810 entered Lorient. After a delay caused by a four-day quarantine, dispatches were

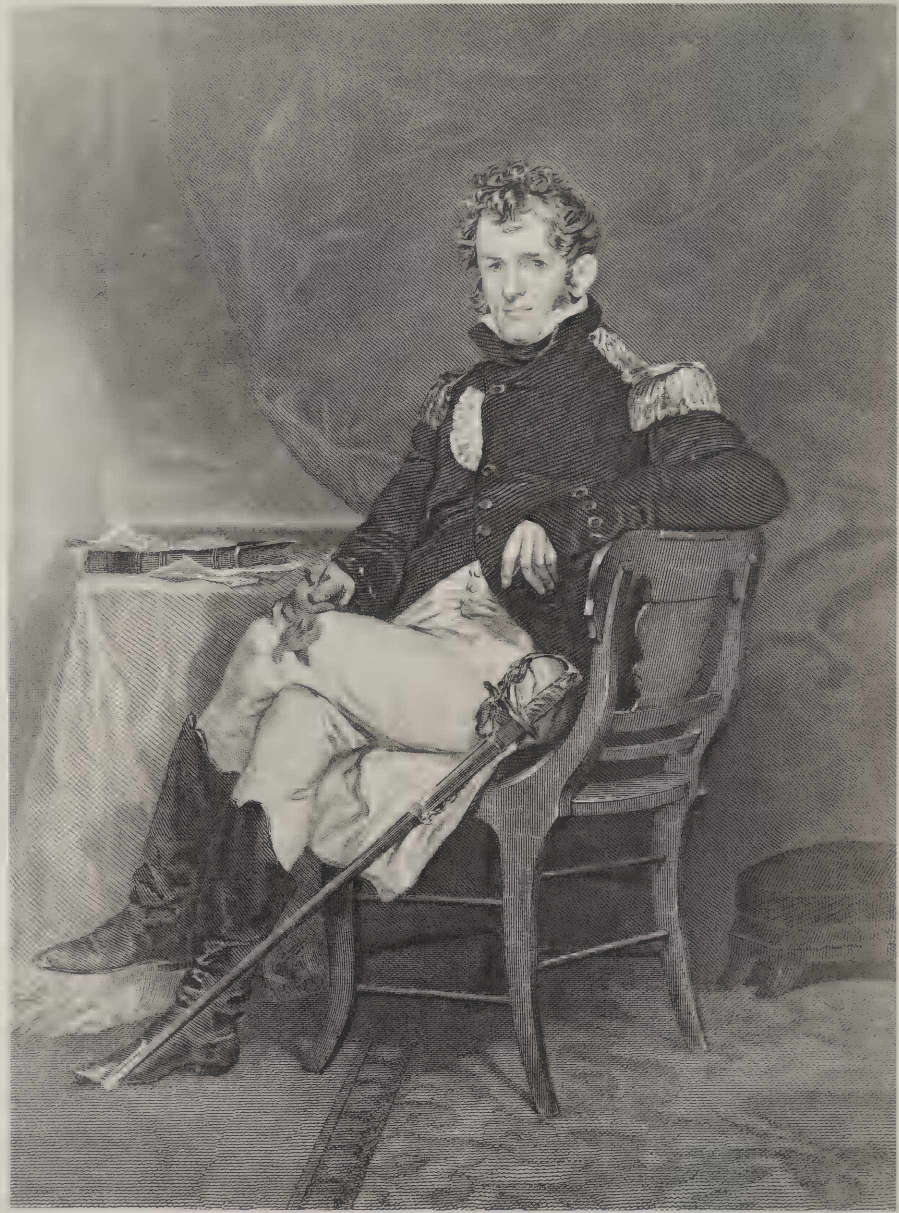


FIG. 58. Captain David Porter (1780–1843), last American commanding officer of the frigate *Essex*.

sent overland to Paris. Contrary winds prevented the *Essex* from leaving Lorient before the twenty-eighth when she shaped a course for Plymouth, England, arriving on 12 January 1811. Further dispatches were sent to William Pinkney, United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Pinkney subsequently determined to return to the United States in the *Essex*; in the meantime she was to return to France to receive return dispatches from Paris and then pick up Pinkney and his family at Cowes, Isle of Wight. The *Essex* returned to Hampton Roads in early July 1811, and Smith was transferred to the *Congress*.

By 9 August, she lay at the New York Navy Yard under the command of David Porter, and the following winter was one of a squadron of four vessels under Commodore Rodgers stationed at Newport, Rhode Island.

When the War of 1812 broke out following the declaration of war against Great Britain on 18 June 1812, the *Essex*, still under Porter, was at New York, but within three weeks had put to sea on a course toward Bermuda. The most notable of the ten prizes she took during this cruise was H.M. sloop-of-war *Alert*, the first British naval vessel captured during the conflict, on 13 August. The *Essex* returned to the United States through a gauntlet of British cruisers early in September, replenished her water and stores, and was attached to a squadron under Commodore William Bainbridge, consisting of the flagship *Constitution*, the *Essex*, and the sloop-of-war *Hornet*. The *Constitution* and *Hornet* went off independently, leaving orders for the *Essex* to join them at specified rendezvous points in the South Atlantic, but if the rendezvous could not be effected, she was to cruise to the southward of St. Helena to intercept homeward bound British East Indiamen, after which Porter was at liberty to act at his own discretion.

Failing to fall in with the Commodore, Preble at length concluded to risk a winter's passage around Cape Horn into the Pacific, there to prey on and live off of the English whaling fleet operating in that area. He accordingly sailed from St. Catherine off the coast of Brazil on 26 January 1813, and, after a tempestuous voyage around the Horn, he anchored at the island of Mocha on the coast of Chile to hunt for fresh food, and on 15 March 1813 entered the neutral waters of Valparaiso Harbor. In so doing, he had added yet another "first" to the *Essex*'s record by becoming the first United States naval vessel to double Cape Horn and navigate the waters of the Pacific. At Valparaiso, the *Essex* revictualled, repaired, and watered before venturing out into the open Pacific.

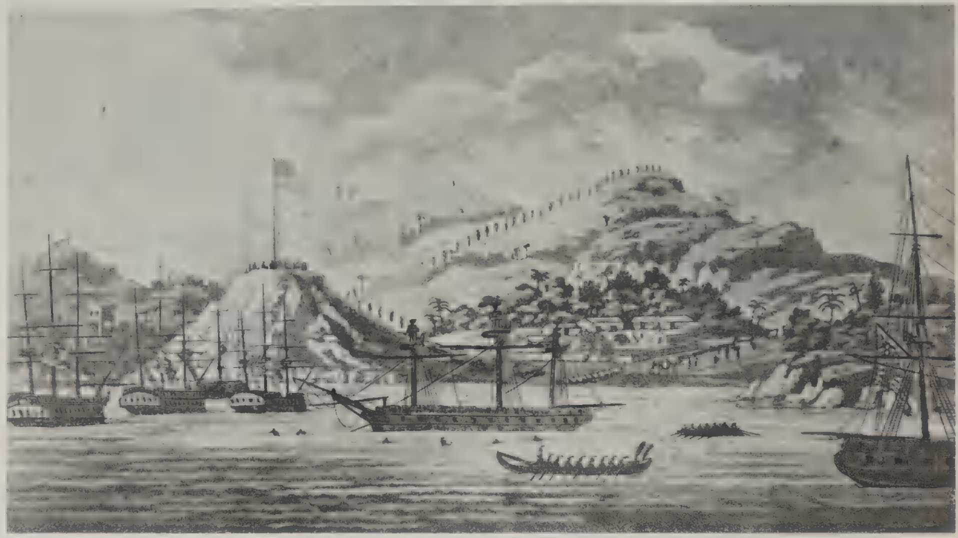


Fig. 59. The *Essex* and her prizes refitting at Nuku Hiva, Marquesas Islands, during the latter part of 1813, from a sketch by Captain David Porter.

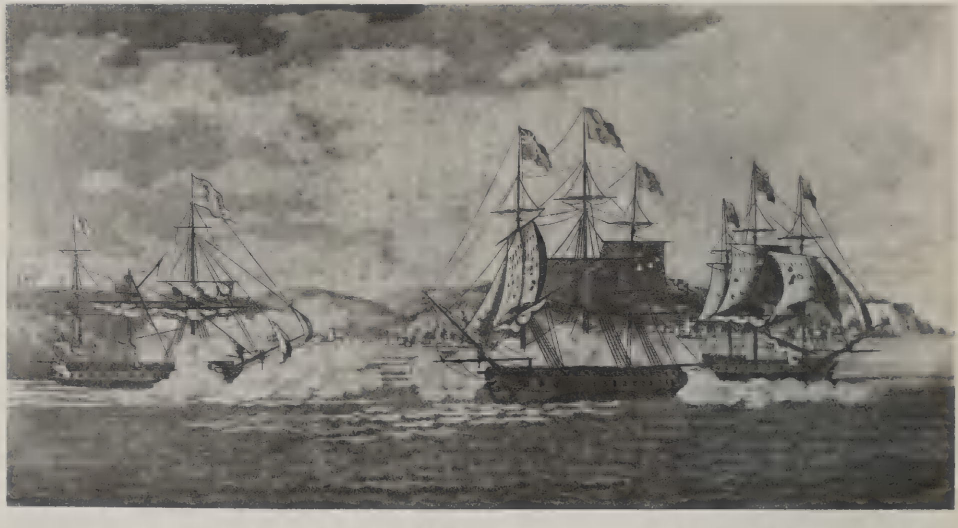


Fig. 60. The capture of the *Essex* by H.M. frigate *Phoebe* and H.M. sloop of war *Cherub* in Valparaiso Bay, Chile, on 28 March 1814. From a sketch by Captain David Porter.

Cruising off the Galapagos Islands for some five months, she began to wreak havoc among British whaleships in the area. The 280-ton whaler *Georgianna*, taken at the end of March, was converted into an armed cruiser under Lieutenant John Downes. During the latter part of May the superior sailing whaleship *Atlantic*, of 355 tons, fell prey to the *Essex*, was converted into a sloop of war of twenty guns to replace the *Georgianna*, placed under Downes' command to act as a consort to the *Essex* and was renamed *Essex Junior*. Between them, and with another prize temporarily armed, they captured fourteen vessels before the middle of September.

By this time, the *Essex* needed to undergo repairs at a place remote from possible British interference. Porter, therefore, shaped a course along the South Equatorial Current to the Marquesas Islands some three thousand miles to the southwest. She anchored at Massachusetts Bay, Nuku Hiva (Madison Island) in late October, where Porter and Downes became involved in assisting the friendly natives of Massachusetts Bay to quell attacks of hostile tribes from other parts of the island. Completing the necessary work on the ships and, in the meantime, having claimed Madison Island for the United States, Porter sailed in company with the *Essex Junior* on 12 December 1813 to return to the coast of Chile.

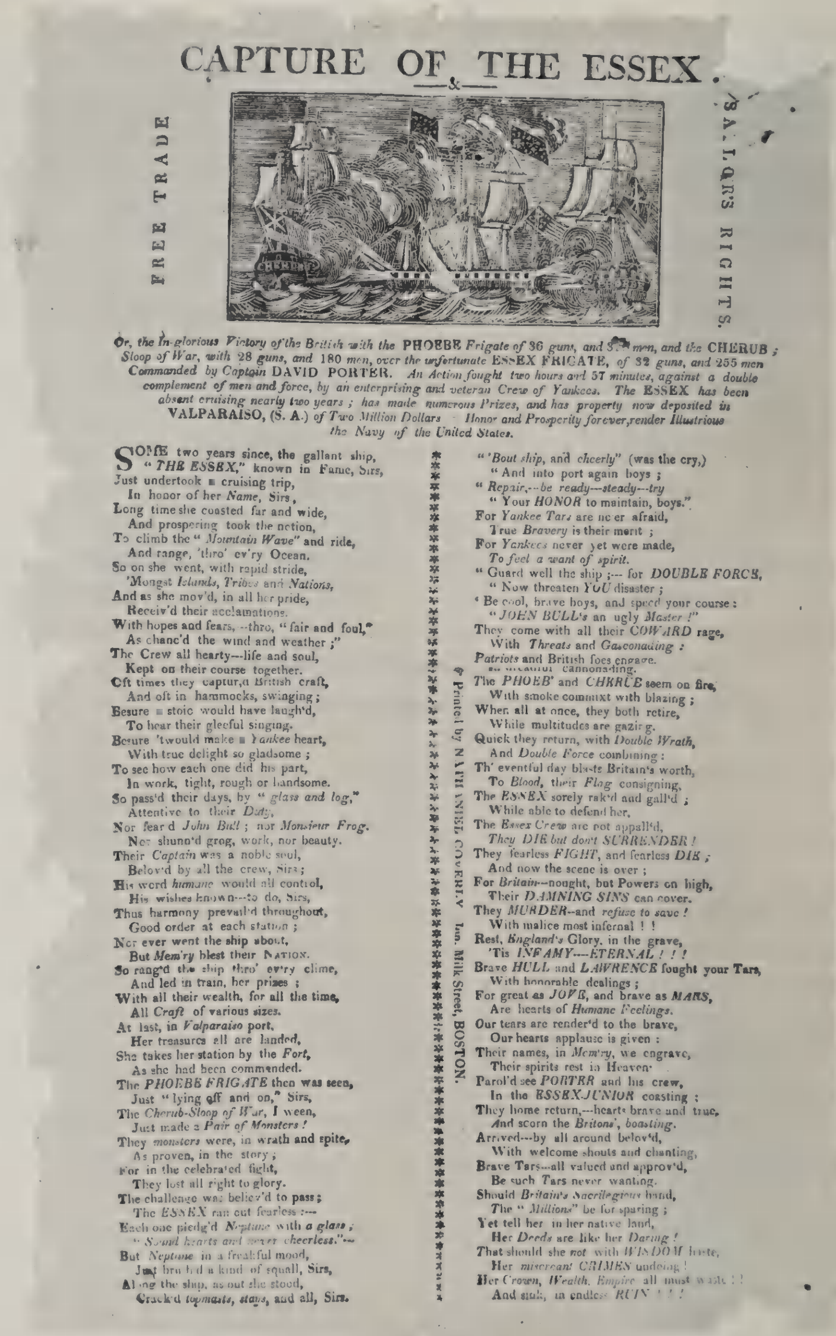
Word having reached the British of the destruction of the whaling fleet, contingents of the Royal Navy were sent into the Pacific to deal with the offending Americans, but when the *Essex* returned to Valparaiso in January 1814 no enemy warships had yet been sighted. Then, on 8 February, as the *Essex* and *Essex Junior* lay at anchor within neutral Valparaiso Bay, H.M. Frigate *Phoebe*, Captain James Hillyar, and H.M. Sloop *Cherub* appeared suddenly, running in towards the bay, and an hour later dropped anchor a short distance from the American ships. In terms of fire power and numbers of men, the two British ships greatly outnumbered what Porter and Downes had at their joint disposal.

There followed nearly seven weeks of taunts and counter-taunts between the opponents before matters finally came to a head. Porter, despite his best efforts to bait Hillyar into a single ship action, failed to get his wish. At length, after learning of the extent of the enemy force scouring the Pacific in search of him, he determined to gain the open sea. On 28 March 1814, he came to sail, intending to pass to windward of the British before they could come to sail in pursuit of him. The *Phoebe*'s logbook tells the rest of the story from the English point of view.

PM . . . At 3.10 Obs^d^ the Enemys Frigate Standing out of the Bay of Valparaiso. Set Main Sail in Chase. Fresh Gales & heavy Squalls. Beat to Quarters. At 3.50 the *Phoebe* & *Cherub* hoisted each a St Georges Ensign bearing the following Inscription, God & Country British Sailors best Rights, Traitors offend both Obs^d^ the Enemy to lose his Main Top Mast and soon afterwards he Bore up and run along shore. At 4 the Enemy Anchor'd about half a mile from the Land & bore two Ensigns, with two white Flags flying, one from the Fore top Gall^t^ Masthead, having Written on it, Free Trade and Sailors Rights, the other at the Mizen top Gall^t^ mast Head having on it, God our Country and Liberty Tyrants offend them, At 4.10 made the Sig^l^ to prepare to Anchor with Springs, up Courses Came on board the Enemys boat with M^r^ O Bryan first Mate, and M^r^ Porter & Boats Crew of the *Phoebe*. *Essex* a Head one Mile Standing towards her quarter. Emp^d^ Ranging cables, and preparing Springs. As we drew into the Bay Ship broke off in the Squalls so as to prevent us from bringing the Enemy to so Close Action as we intended. At 4.20 having fetched as near as the wind permitted, Commenced firing about half Gun Shot off. St. Antonio SW½W 5 Miles. *Cherub* close to us on the Starb^d^ Quarter—Enemy returned our fire with her Aftermost Guns & Stern Chacers. At 4.40 Very near the Shore, ceased firing; Wore round and came to the Wind on the Larb^d^ tack—Mainsail much cut, Jibboom badly wounded, Fore Main & Mizen Stays Shot away and other rigging damages—imp^d^ repairing damages,—At 4.50 Tackd Ship, furled the Mainsail, And hailed the *Cherub*, informed him of our intending to Anchor and ordered him to keep under weigh. At 5.35 commenced firing with the Bow Guns on the Enemy, which was returned,—Light airs, Inclinable to Calm, At 5.50 the Enemy cut his cable, Set his Jib, Fore Topsail & Foresail; Wind becoming light & variable, endeavoured to keep our broadside to bear on the Enemy.—At 6 the firing was hot and Incessant on both sides. At 20 Minuits past 6 the Enemy struck his Colours—Made Sig^l^ to take possession of the Prize. . . .

Hillyar's log scarcely mentions the carnage taking place on both sides or the determined resistance to a vastly superior force from those aboard the *Essex*. Porter's own words, describing the last twenty minutes of the battle, when "the firing was hot and Incessant on both sides," give a graphic view of conditions aboard the *Essex*.

My ship had taken fire several times during the action, but alarmingly so forward and aft; at this moment the flames were bursting up each hatchway, and no hopes were entertained of saving her; our distance from the shore did not exceed three-quarters of a mile, and I hoped many of my brave crew would be able to save themselves, should the ship blow up, as I was informed the fire was near the magazine, and the explosion of a large quantity of powder below served to increase the horrors of the situation—our boats were destroyed by the enemy's shot; I, therefore, directed those who could swim to jump overboard, and endeavour to gain the shore. Some reached it—some were taken by the enemy, and some perished in the attempt; but most preferred sharing with me the fate of the ship. We, who remained, now turned our attention wholly to extinguishing the flames; and when we had succeeded, went again to our guns, where the firing was kept up for some minutes, but the crew had by this time become so weakened, that they all declared to me the impossibility of making further resistance, and entreated me to surrender my ship to save the wounded, as all further attempt at opposition must prove ineffectual, almost every gun being disabled by the destruction of their crews. I now sent for the officers of divisions to consult them; but what was my surprise to find only acting lieutenant Stephen Decatur M'Knight remaining, who confirmed the report respecting the condition of the guns on the gun-deck—those on the spar deck were not in a better state. Lieutenant Wilmer, after fighting most gallantly throughout the action, had been knocked overboard by a splinter while getting the sheet anchor from the bows, and was drowned. Acting lieutenant John G. Crowell, had lost a leg; Mr. Edward Barnewall, acting sailing master, had been carried below, after receiving two wounds, one in the breast and one in the face; and acting lieutenant William H. Odenheimer, had been knocked overboard from the quarter an instant before, and did not regain the ship until after the surrender. I was informed that the cock-pit, the steerage, the ward-room and the birth-deck, could contain no more wounded; that the wounded were killed while the surgeons were dressing them, and that, unless something was speedily done to prevent it, the ship would soon sink from the number of shot holes in her bottom. And, on sending for the carpenter, he informed me that all his crew had been killed or wounded, and that he had been once over the side to stop the leaks, when his slings had been shot away, and it was with difficulty he was saved from drowning. The enemy, from the smoothness of the water, and the impossibility of our reaching him with our carronades, and the little apprehension that was excited by our fire, which had now become much slackened, was enabled to take aim at us as at a target; his shot never missed our hull, and my ship was cut up in a manner which was, perhaps, never before witnessed—in fine, I saw no hopes of saving her, and at twenty minutes after six P.M. gave the painful order to strike the colours. Seventy-five men, including officers were all that remained of my whole crew, after the action, capable of doing duty, and many of them severely wounded, some of whom have since died. The enemy still continued his fire, and my brave, though unfortunate companions, were still falling about me. I directed an opposite gun to be fired, to show them we



CAPTURE OF THE ESSEX.

FREE TRADE

SAILORS RIGHTS.

Or, the In-glorious Victory of the British with the **PHOEBE** *Frigate of 36 guns, and 3[illegible] men, and the* **CHERUB** *; Sloop of War, with 28 guns, and 180 men, over the unfortunate* **ESSEX FRIGATE,** *of 32 guns, and 255 men Commanded by Captain* **DAVID PORTER.** *An Action fought two hours and 57 minutes, against a double complement of men and force, by an enterprising and veteran Crew of Yankees. The* **ESSEX** *has been absent cruising nearly two years ; has made numerous Prizes, and has property now deposited in* **VALPARAISO, (S. A.)** *of Two Million Dollars – Honor and Prosperity forever, render Illustrious the Navy of the United States.*

SOME two years since, the gallant ship,
  "*THE ESSEX,*" known in Fame, Sirs,
Just undertook a cruising trip,
  In honor of her *Name*, Sirs,
Long time she coasted far and wide,
  And prospering took the notion,
To climb the "*Mountain Wave*" and ride,
  And range, 'thro' ev'ry Ocean.
So on she went, with rapid stride,
  'Mongst *Islands, Tribes* and *Nations,*
And as she mov'd, in all her pride,
  Receiv'd their acclamations.
With hopes and fears, --thro, "fair and foul,"
  As chanc'd the wind and weather ;"
The Crew all hearty---life and soul,
  Kept on their course together.
Oft times they captur,d British craft,
  And oft in hammocks, swinging ;
Besure a stoic would have laugh'd,
  To hear their gleeful singing.
Besure 'twould make a *Yankee* heart,
  With true delight so gladsome ;
To see how each one did his part,
  In work, tight, rough or handsome.
So pass'd their days, by "*glass and log,*"
  Attentive to their *Duty*,
Nor fear'd *John Bull* ; nor *Monsieur Frog.*
  Nor shunn'd grog, work, nor beauty.
Their *Captain* was a noble soul,
  Belov'd by all the crew, Sirs ;
His word *humane* would all control,
  His wishes known---to do, Sirs,
Thus harmony prevail'd throughout,
  Good order at each station ;
Nor ever went the ship about,
  But *Mem'ry* blest their NATION.
So rang'd the ship thro' ev'ry clime,
  And led in train, her prizes ;
With all their wealth, for all the time,
  All *Craft* of various sizes.
At last, in *Valparaiso* port,
  Her treasures all are landed,
She takes her station by the *Fort,*
  As she had been commended.
The *PHOEBE FRIGATE* then was seen,
  Just "lying off and on," Sirs,
The *Cherub-Sloop of War,* I ween,
  Just made a *Pair of Monsters !*
They *monsters* were, in wrath and spite,
  As proven, in the story ;
For in the celebrated fight,
  They lost all right to glory.
The challenge was believ'd to pass ;
  The *ESSEX* ran out fearless :---
Each one pledg'd *Neptune* with *a glass ;*
  "*Sound hearts and never cheerless.*"---
But *Neptune* in a freakful mood,
  Just brush'd a kind of squall, Sirs,
Along the ship, as out she stood,
  Crack'd *topmasts, stays,* and all, Sirs.

"'*Bout ship,* and *cheerly*" (was the cry,)
  "And into port again boys ;
"*Repair,---be ready---steady---try*
  "Your *HONOR* to maintain, boys."
For *Yankee Tars* are ne'er afraid,
  True *Bravery* is their merit ;
For *Yankees* never yet were made,
  To feel a want of spirit.
"Guard well the ship ;--- for *DOUBLE FORCE,*
  "Now threaten *YOU* disaster ;
"Be cool, brave boys, and speed your course :
  "*JOHN BULL*'s an ugly *Master !*"
They come with all their *COWARD* rage,
  With *Threats* and *Gasconading :*
Patriots and British foes engage.
  In dreadful cannonading.
The *PHOEB'* and *CHERUE* seem on fire,
  With smoke commixt with blazing ;
When all at once, they both retire,
  While multitudes are gazing.
Quick they return, with *Double Wrath,*
  And *Double Force* combining :
Th' eventful day blasts Britain's worth,
  To *Blood*, their *Flag* consigning,
The *ESSEX* sorely rak'd and gall'd ;
  While able to defend her,
The *Essex Crew* are not appall'd,
  They DIE but don't SURRENDER !
They fearless *FIGHT*, and fearless *DIE ;*
  And now the scene is over ;
For *Britain*---nought, but Powers on high,
  Their *DAMNING SINS* can cover.
They *MURDER*--and *refuse to save !*
  With malice most infernal ! !
Rest, *England's* Glory, in the grave,
  'Tis *INFAMY----ETERNAL ! ! !*
Brave *HULL* and *LAWRENCE* fought your Tars,
  With honorable dealings ;
For great as *JOVE*, and brave as *MARS,*
  Are hearts of *Humane Feelings.*
Our tears are render'd to the brave,
  Our hearts applause is given :
Their names, in *Mem'ry,* we engrave,
  Their spirits rest in Heaven.
Parol'd see *PORTER* and his crew,
  In the *ESSEX-JUNIOR* coasting ;
They home return,---hearts brave and true,
  And scorn the *Britons'*, *boasting.*
Arrived---by all around belov'd,
  With welcome shouts and chanting,
Brave Tars---all valued and approv'd,
  Be such Tars never wanting.
Should *Britain's Sacrilegious* hand,
  The "*Millions*" be for sparing ;
Yet tell her in her native land,
  Her *Deeds* are like her *Daring !*
That should she *not* with *WISDOM* haste,
  Her *miscreant CRIMES* undoing !
Her *Crown, Wealth, Empire* all must waste ! !
  And sink, in endless *RUIN ! ! !*

Printed by NATHANIEL COVERLY Jun. Milk Street, BOSTON.

FIG. 61. Broadside relating to the capture of the *Essex.*

> intended no further resistance; but they did not desist; four men were killed at my side, and others in different parts of the ship. I now believed he intended to show us no quarter, and that it would be as well to die with my flag flying as struck, and was on the point of again hoisting it, when about ten minutes after hauling the colours down he ceased firing!

The *Essex Junior* had not participated in the action. By the time Lieutenant Downes had been able to get aboard the *Essex* for orders, the situation had become virtually hopeless. He was ordered back to defend the *Essex Junior* or, if necessary to prevent her from falling into British hands, to destroy her. Ultimately, by mutual agreement between Porter and Hillyar, she was disarmed to serve as a cartel ship to take Porter and his men back to America on parole.

Hillyar's conduct in the capture of the *Essex* was roundly criticized—he had disregarded the neutrality of Valparaiso and had attacked a disabled ship—behavior which only served to intensify feelings in the United States that the British were truly arrogant and tyrannical.

On 13 April 1814, H.M.S. *Tagus*, one of the ships that had been in pursuit of the *Essex*, entered Valparaiso where the *Phoebe*, *Cherub*, and *Essex* were being patched up and rerigged. Five days afterwards, the *Cherub* departed on a cruise toward the Sandwich Islands, while on the twenty-seventh Porter and the Americans on parole sailed in the *Essex Junior* for the United States. He seriously doubted whether the *Essex* in her shattered state could be taken around the Horn to Rio de Janiero and on to England as was contemplated. He was wrong.

The *Phoebe* and the *Essex* left Valparaiso in company on 31 May, rounded the Horn, and arrived at Rio at the end of July. There, on 4 August, she was commissioned in the Royal Navy as H.M.S. *Essex*, Thomas Morgan, the Flag-Lieutenant to Vice Admiral Dixon of The Brazils Station, in command as Acting Captain. Until mid-September, she underwent further repairs to enable her to weather an autumn passage across the Atlantic to England.

On 15 September, she put to sea in company with H.M.S. *Nereus* and the *Phoebe*. All anchored in Plymouth Sound on the thirteenth of November. From that day, the *Essex* began to be dismantled. Her topmasts were sent down, powder lightered ashore, her sails were unbent and the rigging unrove. Finally, on 15 December, her lower masts were pulled out by a sheer hulk, and she was towed alongside the *Egyptienne* hulk and made fast. At

1:30 P.M. on the eighteenth of December 1814 her pennant was hauled down and her days as a ship of war came to an end forever.

The *Essex* rotted away in ordinary at Plymouth for nine years. During the latter part of 1823 or early 1824, workmen from Plymouth Dockyard came aboard to convert her into a prison ship. By the end of March 1824, she had been towed around Land's End, through St. George's Channel, and into the Irish Sea up to Kingstown—now Dun Loaghaire—on the southern end of Dublin Bay. There, henceforth known as "the Convict Hulk *Essex*," she was moored, crammed with prisoners, until almost the end of the year 1836.

In November 1836, an advertisement for the sale of the *Essex* was published in the Dublin newspapers. Written bids were to be received by the Inspector General of Prisons on or before the first of January 1837. Among the bidders was Peter Jones, Merchant, of 22 Eden Quay, Dublin, whose offer of £1205 to buy her for breaking up topped the others. On 18 February, he received a letter from James Palmer, Inspector General of Prisons, awarding him the bid provided he removed the hulk from Kingstown within a month and paid the amount of his bid into the Bank of Ireland. Almost immediately, Jones embarked for Liverpool where he signed a contract with Messrs. Brown & Askean, whereby he was to resell the hulk to them for breaking up at £1640. He then returned to Ireland with eleven men in pay to take charge of the *Essex* back to Liverpool, but when, on 7 March, he attempted to lodge the amount of the bid with the bank he was told that the sale had been suspended the day before, a letter from the Admiralty in London having just been received claiming the *Essex* was still on the Navy List and was not entitled to be sold by the Government of Ireland.

The Irish Government, under the impression that it had bought the hulk from the Admiralty, rather than receiving it on loan as was actually the case, began diligent searches into the records. Confusion reigned for a number of weeks as one communication after another passed between Dublin and London. Jones, meanwhile, had found himself in a nasty predicament. While the authorities were attempting to determine who had the right to sell the *Essex*, his eleven men from Liverpool were cooling their heels and still drawing their pay. Even worse, Messrs. Brown & Askean were threatening him with a breach of contract, and legal counsel examining the matter had come to the conclusion that Jones had no remedy. Jones faded from sight before any decision about the *Essex* was reached.

When she had first been sent round to Kingstown, a bill had been ren-

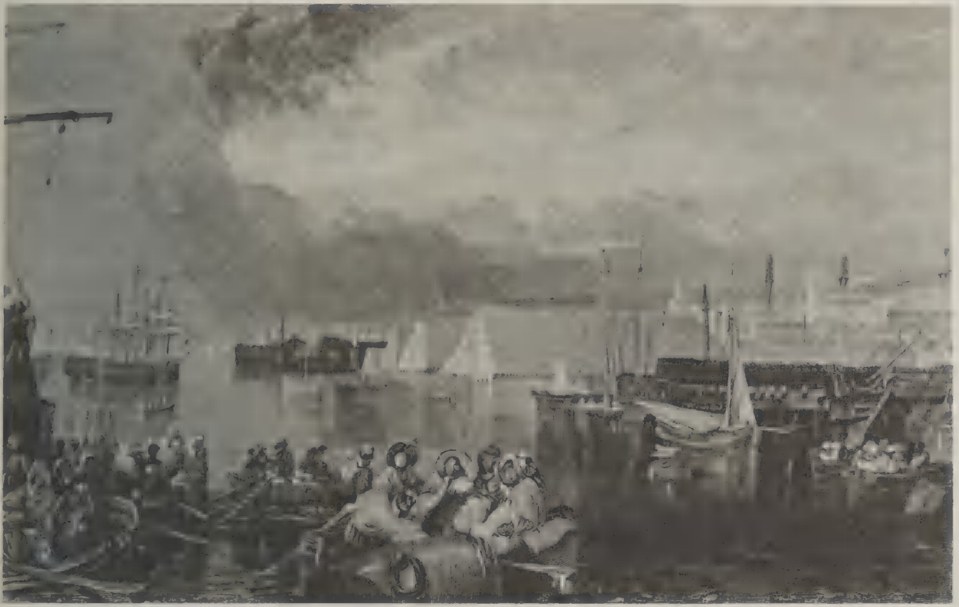


FIG. 62. Hulks laid up in ordinary at Devonport (Plymouth), England.

dered to the Irish Government for the cost of conversion, some of her stores, and the expense of bringing her around from Plymouth. Payment had reimbursed the Admiralty for expenditures incident to the loan but had not constituted a sale to the Irish Government. Officials in Dublin were forced to agree, after examination of the records, that they had found nothing to indicate that she had been actually purchased.

At length, the Admiralty ordered the Irish Government to be repaid for the stores. The hulk was then to be auctioned off. Sale of the "Convict Hulk *Essex*," authorized by the Admiralty, took place at Somerset House on 6 July 1837, and was sold to "Mr Galsworthy" for £2010.

The elusive Mr. Galsworthy we must presume caused "The Salem Frigate" to be broken up or to be burned for her metal.

She had lasted for a long time. Almost all of the other ships built under the Congressional Acts of 1798 had long since disappeared. Most of the principal men concerned in her building were gone too. William Hackett, Enos Briggs, and Joseph Waters were all dead. Of the members of the Salem Frigate Committee only Ichabod Nichols was still just barely alive, while the sands of time had reduced the original ninety-nine subscribers to a mere sixteen.

NOTES

Movements of the *Essex* during much of her career are detailed in the following sources: *Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War Between the United States and France* (Washington, D. C., 1935–1938); *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers* (Washington, D. C., 1939–1945); Captain George Henry Preble, U.S.N., "The First Cruise of the United States Frigate *Essex*," Essex Institute *Historical Collections*, X (1870), part 3; Charles C. Bassett, "The Career of the Frigate *Essex*," Essex Institute *Historical Collections*, LXXXVII (1951), Nos. 1 and 2; and David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise made to the Pacific Ocean, by Captain David Porter, in the United States Frigate Essex, in the years 1812, 1813, and 1814* (New York, 1822).

Details of her refit at the Washington Navy Yard in 1807 and 1808 come from the Josiah Fox Papers at the Peabody Museum of Salem, typescript pages, 1842, 1846, 1849–1851, 1861, 1925, 1931, 1950, 2010–2012, 2366.

The quotation from the Captain's Log of H.M.S. *Phoebe* (Public Record Office, London, Adm. 51/2675) is reproduced by permission of the Comptroller of H.M. Stationery Office. Porter's description of conditions aboard the *Essex* is from his own *Journal of a Cruise* . . . cited above.

The logbook of the *Essex*'s one voyage as a ship of the Royal Navy is at the Public Record Office, London, Adm. 52/4481. A xerox copy thereof is in the library of the Peabody Museum of Salem. Details of her end as a prison hulk in Dublin Harbor are contained in a file at the Dublin State Paper Office, O.P. 1826 940–48, O.P. 654/52, CSORP 1837/7055, and at the Public Record Office, London, Admiralty Correspondence, Adm. 1/4267.

Appendices

Appendices

Abstracts of Cost

– 1 –

Abstract of Materials Wrought & Un wrought for building & Equipment on account of the Committee for building Essex Frigate

1799					Dollars	Cents
Decem^{r}	To	William Hackets Bal^{ce}	Bill	Constructor	921	54
"	"	Enos Briggs	Bill	Building	26616	64
"	"	Alden Briggs	"	Iron Work	8371	94
"	"	William Gray Jun^{r}	"	Cordage &c	10075	3
"	"	Joseph Waters	"	Sundries	12723	91
"	"	William Luscomb	"	Painting & Plumbing	2256	35
"	"	Samuel M^{c}Intire	"	Carving	410	
"	"	Daniel Rust	"	Duck	3731	74
"	"	Salem Iron Factory C^{o}	"	Anchors	1081	92
"	"	David Sears	"	Copper Bolts &c	4339	5
"	"	Buffum & Howard	"	. . . .	730.24	
					71258	36

Salem December 31 1799

Joseph Waters

– 2 –

Abstract of Materials Wrought & Unwrought for building & Equipment on account of Essex Frigate

	Dollars	Cents
Constructer	921	54
Building, Carpenters Bill	26616	64
Iron Work Blacksmith	8371	94
Cordage	10075	03
Painting & Plumbing	2256	35
Carving	410	
Duck for One Compleat Sute of Sails	3731	74
Ankors	1081	92
Copper Bolts &c	4339	05
Sailmakers for making Sails	730	24
Hire of Tradesmen &c	2735	36

J[oseph] W[aters'] Rec^{t} of Sundries, which Includes Spars Bots Block &c	12723	91
Commisons on 73.993.72 at 2 per Cent	1479	87
	$ 75473	59

The Above is the Cost of the Essex with One Compleat
Sute of Sails, & Copper Fastend, but not Copperd, the Expence
of puting on the Copper Included in the Above

Amount of Ordnance & Military Stores & Kentledge [& Copper for Coppering Ship]	31992	76
Amount of Ship Stores	12709	19
Amount of Provisons	12304	52
Slop Clothing	3868	79
Hospital Stores	1526	20
	62401	46

Sundries for Extra Sute of Sails Spars Ankers Duck Cables Labour & Commison &c	16812	72
	$154687	77

The Above is the Cost of the Essex Frigate With
Nearly Twelve Mounths provisons & Stores on board for
India, which place She Went, I presume on Compariong the Cost of this Ship
with thowes Built in the Southern States you Will find A Verry Great Differance—
[And I Asure you that the Essex Was Furnisht Verry Extraveogent in Sume Respects]
hear follows the Dimentions of the Essex Frigate

Gun Deck—141 Feet
Lenth of keel 118 Do
Breadth of Beem 37 Do
Depth of Hold 12.3 Inches
Hith between Gun & Lower Deck 5.9 Inches
Waist 6 Feet
Hight under Quarter Deck 6.3 Inches

Tonage 850 $\frac{21}{95}$

the folowing Prices Are Pretty Corect, by Ex^{g} My Books at the time the Essex was Built

Cordage [$]12.25 to 12.50 pr Cw^{t} Duck hevy at 18 to 20
Hemp [$] 215 to 220 pr Tun Light 10 to 12
Sale Maker $3 per Bolt
Makeing — —
Coopers Bill I paid 7½ Cents pr Gallon White Oak Staves & Iron bound
Blockmakers Bill Compleat for $1355—55 Cents Including pums, handspikes & pins Mallets &^{c}
the Mast Makers Including Tops & Caps With the Ironwork Compleat, and Nerly two sets of Spars except the Lower Mast & Bowsprit $2154.87

Bot Bilding Bill from 6 to 8 Common Laborer $1 [per day] Joiners 1–25 Carpenters 1–50 Such as was heved Extra the Essex being Built by Contract at $30 pr Tun of Corse the Contracter had to pay the Carpenters

– 3 –

hear follows the Prices of Sundry Articles at the time Taking from my Books, With the Amt of Sundry Bills from Meckanics—

Cordage from $12.25 to 12.50
Hemp from $215 to 220
Duck from 18 to 20
Light 10 to 12
Makeing pr Bolt $3
Coopers for Makeing Casks of Different Sises of the best Metearals & Iron bound at 7½ Ct pr Gallon
Common Labourers pr Day $1
Joiners $1.22 to 1.33⅓
Carpenters 1.50
Blockmakers Bill Compleat Including pumps pins Mallets in fact all Coming under that Denomanation, with Spare for the Cruise $1355.55

The Mast Makers Bill Includes, Spars, Makeing Tops Caps Fids, in fact Everry thing Appertaining that Branch, With the Iron Work 2154.87
The Ships Boats Whear Built by the Foot
$8 pr foot for the Long Boat
$6 do for the Others

The whole timber for building the ship was procured in the neighbourhood of Salem and brought in on sleds and waggons.

Anchors

The seven largest anchors for the *Essex* were manufactured by the Salem Iron Factory Company in Danvers and measured:

Bower No. 1	3,486 pounds	manufactured at 16¢/pound
Bower No. 2	3,276 "	
Bower No. 3	3,762 "	
Bower No. 4	3,990 "	
Stream	1,092 "	manufactured at 11¢/pound
Kedge No. 1	515 "	
Kedge No. 2	484 "	

Armorer's Forge

An Armourer's Forge with Cast Iron bottom & deep Wro^{t} Iron Rim round the edge of do—4 Square wro^{t} Iron feet with a Cross Brace to Support the forge, a Strong wro^{t} Iron frame for the Bellows with 2 Standards & 3 Strong Cross and Shifting Braces & Nutts with Cradle and rock Staff A Cast Iron Pan fixed in a wrought Iron frame under the Forge to receive the Shott to Charge the Furnace, Cast Iron Furnace with door & 2 Ring Bolts—Strong Iron Chain with 2 Hooks for fixing to the forge Iron Ring Shovel for taking out the Shott when hot, with 1 Pair Bellows For the Same

Complete [£] 34.10.–	
1 Best Anvil & Bick	4. 6. 0
1 Pair Standing Vices	1. 6. 6
1 Binch Vice 7/6 2 hand do 7/	14. 6
1 Binch Stake 10/ 1 Beak Iron 16/ 1 Upright drill 5/6	1.11. 6
1 Pair Stock Shears 10/6 1 Screw Plate 5/6	16.
1 Pair Cutting Nippers 4 pair Pincers	4.
2 Pair Plyers 4/6 1 Ladle 1/ & a Brace & Bills 8/6	14.
1 Drill Bow with drills 10/ & breast Plate 2/	12.
2 Knotts Gutt 1/2 2^{lb} Brass Solder 3/ 1 Ridge ham^{r} 7/8	11.10
4 Hammers sorted 17/ 2 Cold Chissells 3/6	1. 0. 6
4 Punches 1/10 1 Bolster ^{d}8 3 p^{r} Tongs 8/ 1 Solder^{g} Iron 3/6	14.
1 Bright Wrinch 6/6 6 Hammer handles Sorted 2/	8. 6
18 file handes 1/6 3 lb Emery 1/6 2 lb Borax 2/6 & 2^{lb} Sal Almoniac 6/8	12. 2
3 ^{lb} Soft Solder 3/ 2 ^{lb} Rotten Stone 1/ & 3 Quire Emery Paper 7/6	11. 6
38 Files assorted	1.18.
1 Strong Wood Tool Chest	.12.

Blacksmith Bills

ALDEN BRIGGS

– 1 –

1799 M^{r} William Gray M^{r} Jacob Ashton Capt^{t} Ichabod
Nichols M^{r} John Norris & Cap^{t} Benjamin Hogers as
Committy for the Subscribers of the town of Salem
for Building y^{e} Friget Essex for y^{e} United States
To Alden Briggs Debtr

1799		
May 21	To 15 days work making forges troughs &c	$15.50
	to Block to Set^{g} anvels on	3.50
July 24	to 18 Steal^{d} marlen Spikes recv^{d} 54^{lb} @ 20^{Cent}	10.80
	to 6 Bolt augers for y^{e} Coppers Bolts @ 7/6	7.50
Aug^{t} 26	to 10 Steal^{d} Scrapers @ 3/6	5.84
Sep^{t} 7	to drawing 116^{lb} of Copper Bolts @ 20^{Cent}	23.20
y^{e} 9	to making 300 Copper Nails for leading & 16 Copper dogs for y^{e} Pumps 22^{lb} @ 30^{Cent}	6.60
	to 1 days work Cuting out y^{e} rudder Braces myself	1.50
	To making a Larg drill 75^{Cent} & 4 Cold Chisels To Cut out y^{e} rudder Brases 1 dollar	1.75
y^{e} 21	to makeing 8½ lb of Small Copper Nails 34^{Cent}	2.89
y^{e} 26	to fileing a 11 Copper Roles for y^{e} tiller	0.75
y^{e} 28	to makeing 4½ lb of Small Copper Nails 34^{Cent}	1.53
	to Cuting 15 Larg Screwes for y^{e} Bell and tiller & wheel	2.50
Octo^{b}		
y^{e} 12	to 31–½^{lb} of very Small Copper Nails to Seal the magezene @ 3/	15.75
	to 1–0–4^{lb} of Sheathing Nails Bought of W^{m} Ropes 81/	13.94
	to upseting 150^{wt} of Copper Bolts @ 9/	2.25
Nov		
y^{e} 2	to 3¾ lb of Small Coper Nails 3/	1.87
y^{e} 9	to 8½ ditto 3/	4.25
y^{e} 16	to 6¼ ditto 3/	3.12
	to 8½ lb Steal^{d} Pointed Bolts to draft the Bolts out of y^{e} Cable Bits at 1/	1.42
y^{e} 22	to makeing 57 Square welded thimbles for y^{e} Sails 1/	9.50
	to 43 Span ditto for y^{e} Sails not welded 10^{Cent}	4.30
	to Iron work for hang y^{e} Bell to y^{e} Ship	8.50
		148.26

[Tabular List of Iron Delivered Here Omitted]

to y^{e} above Iron 70361 ^{lb} at ten Cents & five mills p^{r} Pound which is	.$ 7387.95
to Cuting of 8129 ^{wt} of Copper Bolts @ 75^{Cent}	60.94
to Reveting 826 Copper Bolts @ 5 Cent	41.30
to Sawing of 277 Copper Bolts @ 6 Cent	16.62
to reveting 2607 Bolts Iron @ 5 Cent	130.35
to y^{e} Iron that my Brother workt 3550½ lb @ 10 & ½ Cents	372.80
to 50 Bolts my Brother reveted @ 5 Cent	2.50
to y^{e} Expence of a man & hors to Pembroke	10.00
to Spare work from Novm^{b} 22 to Decm^{b} 16 Capt. P. to Altaring 16 Quarter irons @ 1/6 p^{r} order	4.00
to Straping 4 Snach Blocks @ $7	28.00
to 138½ lb of Pump Spears & Staples @ /9	17.32
to ironing Pumb Brakes & Pump Bolts 19½ 1/	3.25
to 146¾ lb hooks & thimbles of my Brother Enos @ /9	18.32
to 716¾ lb iron into Sundry articles @ /9	89.60
to Bolts Reveted from Novm^{b} 22 to Decm^{b} 16 = 137 @ 5 Cent	6.85
to M^{r} Bowkers & Stodard Bill 445 lb	61.51½
to makeing 2 Pair Port hinge not used that Capt Waters Promis to Pay for 28 lb y^{e} work Part	1.54
	8252.89½

– 2 –

The Committee for building Essex Frigate

To Alden Briggs D^{r}

1799				Dollars Cents
July	24	To 18 Steel Marline Spikes W^{t} 54^{lb}	at 20 Cents	10.80
"	"	" 6 Bolt Augers	125 "	7.50
Aug^{t}	28	" 10 Steel Scrapers	3/6	5.84
Septem^{r}	7	" Drawing 116^{lb} Copper Bolts	at 20 Cents	23.20
"	9	" Making 300 Copper Nails & 16 Copper Dogs for Pumps	22^{lb} at 30 Cts	6.60
"	"	" 1 days Work Cutting out Bowsprit		1.50
"	"	" making a Drill & 4 Cold Chissels & Cutting Rudder Brasses		1.75
"	"	" " 8½″ Small Copper Nails	at 34 Cents	2.89
"	26	" Filing 11 Copper Roles for the Tiller		.75
"	28	" Making 4½″ Small Copper Nails	at 34 Cents	1.53
"	"	" Cutting 15 large Screws for the Bell & Tiller Wheel		2.50

Octobr	12	“	31½ Small Copper Nails for Ceiling the Magazine at 50 Cts			15.75
“	“	“	1.0.4 Sheathing Nails	at 81/		13.94
“	“	“	Upsetting 150lb Copper Bolts	9/		2.25
Novemr	16	“	18½lb Small Copper Nails	3/		9.25
“	“	“	8½lb Steel pointed Bolts, to draft the Bolts out of the Cable Bits			1.42
“	“	“	Making 57 Spare Welded Thimbles for Sails at 1/			9.50
“	“	“	“ 43 not Welded for do	10 Cents		4.30
“	“	“	Iron Work for Ships Bell			8.50
“	“	“	73911½lb Iron Work	at 10½ Cents		7760.70
“	“	“	Rivetting 2744 Bolts (Iron)	5 “		137.20
“	“	“	“ 826 Copper Bolts			41.30
“	“	“	Cutting 8129 “ “	75 Cents Pr Ct		60.94
“	“	“	Sawing 277 “ “	6 “		16.62
“	“	“	Rivetting 50 “ “	5 “		2.50
			Spare Work by order of Capt Preble			
“	“	“	Strapping 4 Snatch Blocks	at $7	$28.	
“	“	“	138½lb Pump Spears & Staples	9d	17.32	
“	“	“	Ironing pump Brakes & pump Bolts 19½	at 1/	3.25	
“	“	“	716 ¾ lb Chain Bolts & Thimbles	at 9d	89.60	
“	“	“	2 Port Hinges		1.54	
“	“	“	150½lb Fish Hooks & Anchor Stocks	at 9d	18.81	
“	“	“	252½lb Can hooks Bill-hooks &c	10d	35.7–	
“	“	“	42lb Rods for GangWays	1/	7.	
“	“	“	Altering 16 Quarter Irons	25 Cents	4.	
“	“	“	146 ¾ lb Hooks & Thimbles	9d	18.32	222.91
Received payment at different times & for which have given duplicate Bills & Receipts						8371.94

Alden Briggs

SETH BROOKS

– 1 –

1799 Capt Joseph Warters for the Committe for Building the Essex Frigate

to Seth Brooks Dr

Apr	10	to	1 pair hinges 6½ Lb @ 9d for Shop 1 hasp & 2 Staples for Shop		6	2
July	6	to	16 Bolts & Rings for Blocks @ 1/ (9 day) 32 Do @ 1/	2	8	
	10	to	8 Do @ 1/ (11 day) Bolting 2 harts @ 3/		14	
	12	to	18 Do @ 1/ 6 Do @ 1/	1	4	
		to	fixing 2 pins for Blocks 1/6 (13 day) 4 Bolts & Rings @ 1/		5	6

	13	to	ribbeting 12 Sheeves & pins for Riging Loft		15	
	18	to	10 Bolts & Rings for Blocks @ 1/ (19 day) to 8 D^{o} @ 1/		18	
	20	to	25 D^{o} D^{o} @ 1/ (22 day) 20 D^{o} @ 1/	2	5	
	22	to	fixing 2 pins for blocks @ 1/6 (23 day) 4 bolts & rings @ 1/		5	6
	24	to	2 pins for blocks 3/ (24 day) 8 Bolts & Rings @ 1/		11	
		to	Ribbeting 6 Sheaves 4/6 (26 day) 36 Bolts & Rings @ 1/	2	0	6
	26	to	2 pins for blocks W^{t} 5½ lb @ 1/ fixing 6 D^{o} 2/3		7	9
	27	to	8 bolts & Rings for blocks @ 1/ 4 pins for D^{o} @ 1/		12	
	29	to	fixing 7 pins for blocks 2/4 (30 day) 8 bolts & Rings @ 1/		10	4
	30	to	D^{o} 1 hart for the M Stay		6	
Aug^{t}	1	to	Ribbeting 7 Sheaves @ 9^{d} (2 day) 1 Wormer 4/6		9	9
		to	4 pins for blocks @ 1/ 16 bolts & Rings for harts @ 1/	1		
	3	to	Ribbeting 14 Sheaves @ 9^{d} Bolting 2 harts @ 1/		12	6
	5	to	11 pins for blocks 52½ lb @ 1/ Ribbeting 14 Sheave @ 1/	3	3	
	6	to	8 D^{o} D^{o} 15 lb @ 1/ Ribbeting 6 Sheaves @ 9^{d}		19	6
	8	to	Ribbeting 24 Sheaves @ 9^{d}		18	
		to	10 bolts for the Mast 17¾ lb @ 9^{d} 10 Rings 2/		15	3¾
	9	to	Fixing 1 pin 4^{d} (10 day) 2 pins for blocks 3¼ lb @ 9^{d}		3	7
	10	to	26 small pins for blocks @ 9^{d} (12 day) Ribbing 2 sheaves @ 9^{d}	1	1	
	13	to	2 pins for D^{o} @ 1/ Ribbeting 28 Sheaves @ 9^{d}	1	3	
	14	to	32 bolts & Rings for blocks @ 1/	1	12	
	21	to	10 pins for blocks 15 lb @ 1/ Ribbeting 10 Sheaves @ 9^{d}	1	2	6
	22	to	2 pins 14¾ lb @ 1/ for the Botsprit Bees		14	9
	24	to	1 hook for scales 2/ (26 day) 6 pins for blocks 12¼ lb @ 1/		14	3
	28	to	fixing 4 pins 1/ (31 day) 24 bolts & Rings for blocks @ 1/	1	5	
Sep	2	to	28 bolts & Rings for blocks @ 1/	1	8	
	3	to	2 pins for blocks 5½ lb @ 1/ Ribbeting 4 Sheaves @ 9^{d}		8	6
	4	to	8 bolts & Rings for blocks @ 1/ (6 day) Ribbeting 6 Sheve @ 9^{d}		12	6
	10	to	Bolting 2 harts 4/ (11 day) 2 pins for blocks 2/6		6	6
	13	to	4 pins for blocks 6¼ lb @ 1/		6	3
Oct	2	to	Ribbing 5 Sheves @ 9^{d} 2 pins for blocks @ 1/		5	9
	7	to	8 Large pins for topmasts 121½ lb @ 1/	6	12	6
	8	to	4 pins for blocks 12¾ lb @ 1/		12	9
		to	6 D^{o} for D^{o} @ 1/ Ribbing 2 Sheavs @ 9^{d}		7	6
	9	to	1 pump spear 7½ lb @ 9^{d} Nailing D^{o} 9^{d}		6	4
	9	to	Ironing 1 pump Box Brake 4/ 1 bolt 1/		5	
	11		5 hoops for the pump 18/ Ribbeting 4 Sheave @ 9^{d}	1	1	
	12		2 pins for Blocks 4¼ lb @ 1/ (15 day) 1 Pin 1/		5	3
	19		Straping 1 Dead Eye 4/6		4	6
	21		1 Clasp & 2 Staples 1/6 (22 day) Ribbeting 4 Sheaves @ 9^{d}		4	6

8 pins for blocks @ 1/ (23 day) Ribbeting 2 Sheaves @ 9^{d}		9	6
	£ 42	8	2¾
	$141.37		

Received payment & for which have given
duplicate Bills & Receipts—
Seth Brooks

– 2 –

1799 Capt^{t} Joseph Warters to Seth Brooks D^{r} for the Essex Frigate

				£	s	d
Oct^{r}	24	to	100 pair hankuffs @ 3/ to Ironing 24 Match Stocks @ 9^{d}	15	18	
		to	fixing 1 pin 6^{d} 28 day fixing 2 pins for blocks 2/	–	2	6
Nov^{m}	1	to	1 Gudgin for a boat 1/ (6 Day) 1 pole^{d} ax 9/	–	10	–
	7	to	93^{lb} Chains @ 1/3 40 britching thimbles @ 1/	7	16	3
	8	to	4 marnspikes w^{t} 11¼^{lb} @ 9^{d} 130 pair hadcuff & Leg Irons @ 3/	19	18	6
		to	36 Gun bitts @ 1/6 36 priming Wires @ 9^{d}	4	1	–
			Ironing 12 match stocks @ 9^{d} 178 Copper bradds 21/	1	10	–
			36 Wormers : 4/6 48 briching hooks 200 ¾^{lb} @ 9^{d}	15	12	4
			15 doz^{n} Nails for the Wormers @ 9^{d} pr doz^{n}	–	11	3
	19	to	12 scrapers @ 3/6 24 small marnspikes for Guns @ 9^{d}	3	–	–
		to	Making 1 Copper Ring & Staple for a scuttle	–	1	6
	20	to	fixing bolts & four Locks for 4 cariges @ 4/6	–	18	–
	29	to	2 Grates & pans @ 80/	8	–	–
	30	to	15^{lb} wire @ 1/6 3 Clasps & Staples for Arm Chest @ 4/6	1	7	–
Dec^{m}	2	to	12 bolts & Rings for blocks @ 1/	–	12	–
			2 spike tools @ 6/ 2 Deck Nail D^{o} @ 4/6	1	1	–
			2 Drawing Nail tools @ 1/9 2 Ribbet D^{o} @ 3/	–	9	6
			1 brad & 1 bord Nail tool @ 4/6	–	4	6
			1 handle for a soddering Iron 1/6 10½^{lb} Steel @ 1/6	–	17	3
			2 Sett of hammers 9/	–	9	–
			5 = 0 · · 13 lbs of Bar Iron @ 34/6	8	16	6
			7–0–0 lb Nail Rods @ 42/	14	14	–
	4		12 bolts & Rings for blocks @ 1/	–	12	–
			2 Marnspikes 6½ lbs @ 9^{d} 6 Small D^{o} for Guns @ 9^{d}	–	9	4
			4 Large Clasps & Staples @ 2/ for the Arm Chest	–	8	–
			8 bolts & rings for blocks @ 1/	–	8	–
	5		2 Gun Scrapers @ 18/ Ironing 55 handspikes @ 2/	7	6	–
			3 pins for blocks 11½^{lb} @ 1/	–	11	6
			16 bolts and Rings for blocks @ 1/	–	16	–
			400 spare Kees for handCuff @ 7/6 p^{r} hund	1	10	–
			1 Sledge 8/ Ribbeting 20 Sheves @ 9	1	3	–

			5 pins for blocks 23½ lb @ 1/	1	3	3
	6		Ribbeting 22 Sheves @ 9^{d} 9 pins for blocks @ 1/	1	5	6
			6 Clasps & Staples @ 9^{d}	–	10	6
			1 pin for a block w ⅐ lb @ 1/ 60 Rings & Kees @ 4^{d}	1	7	–
			23 pins for D^{o} @ 1/ (7 Day) 127 Copper Brads 15/	1	18	–
	7		5 D^{o} for D^{o} @ 1/ fixing 8 D^{o} 1/6	–	6	6
			4 Spindels for Loggs Reels @ 3/ handles for D^{o} 3/	–	15	–
			11 pins for blocks @ 1/ Ribbeting 25 Sheves @ 9^{d}	1	9	9
	9		3 D^{o} D^{o} @ 1/ 1½ bushels charcole 2/	–	5	–
			8 lb Spikes & Deck Nails @ 9^{d}	–	6	–
			17 pins for blocks @ 1/ Ribbeting 58 Sheves @ 9^{d}	3	0	6
Dec^{m}	10	to	8 bolts & Rings for Blocks @ 1/	–	8	–
		to	Ribbeting 10 Sheves @ 9^{d} 1 pin for a block 1/	–	8	6
	11	to	4 lb spikes for the boom @ 9^{d}	–	3	–
			3 Anchors & 2 Creepers W^{t} 198 lb @ 10^{d}	8	5	–
	12		4 Logerheads W^{t} 28½ lb @ 9^{d} for the Gunner	1	1	4
			4 Cat Schrews & 4 thimbles Del^{d} Capt^{t} Preble 9/	–	9	–
	13		100 Copper Brads 10/ 1 pin for a block W^{t} 1½ lb @ 6/	–	11	6
			Ribbeting 3 Sheves @ 9^{d} (14 day) 1 pump hook W^{t} 21 lb @ 9^{d}	–	18	–
	14		making 133 copper Brads Del^{d} Gunner 7/6	–	7	6
			D^{o} 2 Copper clasps & Staples Gunner	–	3	–
			fixing an Iron for a false fire	–	4	–
			Strapping a block 18/ 1 Iron Tiller 8/	1	6	–
	16	to	2 pins for blocks W^{t} 5 lb @ 1/ Ribbeting 2 Sheve @ 9^{d}	–	6	6
			1 Large Knife & Cleever Del^{d} Steward 7/6	–	7	6
	18		18 Briching hooks & thimbles W^{t} 88 lb @ 9^{d}	3	6	–
			6 D^{o} thimbles @ 1/	–	6	–
			12 Marnspikes W^{t} 44 lb @ 9^{d} fixing 4 D^{o} 1/6	1	14	6
			4 Boat hooks @ 2/6 2 hatchets @ 5/	1	–	–
			10 Clasps & 20 Staples 15/ for Capt^{t} Preble	–	15	–
			fixing 1 Strap for a Snatch block 9/	–	9	–
	20	to	1 Scutle Bar & Staples Del^{d} Gunner	–	9	–
			111 lb Bolt Rods @ 9^{d}	4	3	3
			3 Axes @ 8/	1	4	–
			1 Bushel of Sea Coal	–	4	–
			Sundres as p^{r} bill Del^{d} the Cooper	17	15	4
			Sundres as p^{r} bill Del^{d} the Carpenter	43	18	9
				£ 222	7	7
			[$]	741.26		

Received payment & for which have given
duplicate Bills & Receipts—

Seth Brooks

Block & Pumpmaker's Accounts

– 1 –

Spar work	14 Deadeys	13 Inches	
	10 Deadeys	7½ Inches	
	5 Deadeys	6 Inches	
101	24 Singel Blocks	5 Inch	
	24 Singel Block	6 Inch	
106	24 Singel Blocks	7 Inch	
	9 Dozen of Leading Trunks		
	2 patent Log reals		Sailing Master
	8 Splicing Fids		
	7 Set of pump Boxes		Carpenter
	4 pump Braks		
	26 Servin mallets		
	4 Sister Blocks	19 Inch	
	2 Dito	14 Inch	
	4 Dito	11 Inch	
	4 Harts	9 Inch	
	2 Dito	10 Inch	
	2 Dito	13 Inch	
	2 Dito	15 Inch	
	6 Sheve Blocks	16 Inch	
	4 Fiddel Blocks	20 Inch	
	2 Sheves	4½ Inch	
	2 Snach Blocks	12 Inch	
	4 Snach Blocks	15 Inch	
116	4 Snach Blocks	16 Inch	
217	2 Snach Blocks	18 Inch	
	2 Viol Blocks	24 Inch	
	4 Sholders Block	17 Inch	Singel Plank
	1 Tribbel Block	16 Inch	— Plank
	6 Doubel Blocks	16 Inch	Doubel Scord Plank
	2 Doubel Blocks	16 Inch	Singel Scord Plank
	12 Doubel Blocks	11 Inch	
	11 Doubel Blocks	9 Inch	
	17 Doubel Blocks	8 Inch	
	15 Singel Blocks	8 Inch	
	2 Singel Blocks	12 Inch	
	Bushing 137 Sheves		
	24 Handspiks		
	6 Doubel Blocks	6 Inch	
	1 Do	8	
	1 Do	9	

2 Do	10	
1 Do	14	
2 Do	17	
12 Singel Blocks	9	Inch
66 S	10	
11 S	11	
48 S	12	
1 S	8	
4 S	17	
2 S	15	
5 S	16	
1 S	19	
163		

[Felts List Blocks &c.]

– 2 –

D^r Capt Joseph Waters for the Committee for building the Essex Frigate to Benj^a Felt

			$	Cents
To 87 Single Blocks shells	8 Inches	at 17 Cents	14	79
To 18 Double Blocks shells	8 Inches	at 17 Cents per mortas	6	12
To 68 Single Blocks shells	9 Inches	@ 21 Cents	14	28
To 24 Double Block shells	9 Inches	@ 21 Cents per mortas	10	8
To 25 Single Block shells	10 Inches	@ 28 Cents	7	0
16 Double Block shells	10 Inches	@ 28 Cents per mortes	8	96
22 Single Block shells	11 Inches	@ 34 Cents	7	48
2 Double Block shells	11 do	@ 34 Cents	1	36
4 Single Block shells	12 do	@ 40 Cents	1	60
6 Double Block shells	12 do	@ 40 Cents per mortes	4	80
9 Single Block shells	13 do	@ 50 do per do	4	50
7 Double Block do	14 do	@ 59 do per mortes	8	26
4 Yard Tackels	20 do	@ 100 Cents per mortes	8	0
6 Snatch Blocks	16 Inches	150 Cents	9	0
4 Plank Block shells single	18 Inches	at $3	12	0
2 Thrible Block shells plank	16 Inches	@ 3 dols per mortes	18	0
8 Double Block shells do	15 Inches	@ 3 dols per mortes	48	0
4 Sister Block shells do	19 Inches	@ 1 dol per mortes	8	0
5 Double Block shells plank	19 Inches	@ 3 dols per mortes	30	0
2 Thrible Block shells plank	19 do	@ 3 dols per mortes	18	0
1 Single Block shells plank	19 do	@ 3 dols	3	0
4 Double Block shells plank	18 Inches	@ 3 dols per mortes	24	0
4 Single Block shells plank	17 Inches	@ 3 dols per do	12	"
5 Single Block shells plank	18 Inches	@ 3 dols per do	15	"

2 Single Block shells plank 18 Inches @ 3 dols per do	6	“
8 Single Block shells plank 17 Inches @ 3 dols per do	24	“
2 Long Tackle Block shells plank 30 Inches @ 3 dols per do	12	“
2 Thrible mast Blocks plank 24 Inches @ 8 dols per do	48	“
1 Single mast Block plank 24 Inches @ 8 dols per	8	“
4 Double Block shells plank 18 Inches @ 3 dols per do	24	“
4 Double Block shells plank 17 Inches @ 3 dols per mortes	24	“
7 Single Block shells plank 17 Inches @ 3 dols per do	21	“
3 Double Block shells plank 17 Inches @ 3 dols per mortes	18	“
5 double Block shells plank 16 Inches @ 3 dols per do	30	“
8 Single Block shells plank 16 Inches @ 3 dols per do	24	“
4 Double Blocks shells 10 Inches 40 Cents per mortes	3	20
4 Double Blocks 9 Inches @ 32 Cents per mortes	2	56
4 Single Blocks 9 do @ 32 do per do	1.	28
To 2 Double Block shells 9 Inches @ 88 Cents per mortes	3	52
1 Vial do 24 Inches @ $3 per do	3	0
6 Iron Bushes at 29 each & to Bushing 6 Sheaves @ 25 Cents	3	24
1 Sheave 30 cents 2 double Blocks 12 Inches @ 60 cents per mortes	2	70
4 double Blocks 8 Inches @ 25 Cents per mortes	2	0
4 Single do 9 Inches @ 32 do per do	1	28
1 Sheave 7 Inches 22 Cents & Bushing 12 Sheaves @ 25 cents	3	22
2 Thrible Blocks 12 Inches @ 60 cents per mortes	3	60
2 Thrible do 13 Inches @ 74 cents per do	4	44
16 Dead Eyes 7½ Inches @ 25 cents each	4	“
8 do do 6 Inches @ 16 cents each	1	28
18 do do 13 Inches @ 74 cents each	13	32
3 Double Blocks 6 Inches @ 16 cents per mortas		96
3 Single Blocks 6 do @ 16 cents per mortas		48
4 Double serveing mallets at 100 cents each	4	0
5 Large do do @ 50 cents each	2	50
8 Common do do @ 25 cents each	2	“
2 Sister Blocks 14 Inches @ 67 Cents each	1	34
9 Dead Eyes 6 Inches @ 16 cents each	1	44
9 do do 7½ Inches @ 25 cents each	2	25
6 Furdick Staves @ 17 cents & 11 Fidds at 75 cents	9	27
2 Spunyarn Venches @ 150 cents each	3	0
4 Dead Eyes 9 Inches @ 32 cents each	1	28
1 Sheave 8 Inches @ 30 cents		30
2 Harts 10 Inches @ 40 cents 4 Sister Blocks 14 Inches @ 67 each	3	48
2 Bools Eyes 8½ Inches @ 31 cents each		62
1 Single Block 10 Inches @ 40		40
3 double Blocks 6 Inches @ 16 cents per mortas		96
7 Single Blocks 6 Inches @ 16 cents each	1	12
11 do do 7 Inches @ 20 cents each	2	20
6 do do 8 Inches @ 25 cents each	1	50

2 Dead Eyes 7½ Inches @ 25 cents each		50
2 Harts 16 Inches @ 175 cents each	3	50
1 Single Block @ 60		60
6 Dead Eyes 13 Inches @ 74 cents each	4	44
7 do do 9 Inches 32 cents each	2	24
To 1 Hart 18 Inches Double Sec'ard at 8 dols	8	"
1 Hart 20 Inches Double do at 10 Dollars	10	"
2 double Serveing mallets @ 1 dols each	2	"
7 dead Eyes 9 Inches @ 32 cents each	2	24
4 Harts 11 Inches at 63 cents each	2	52
1 Hart 17 Inches double Securd @ 7 dollars	7	0
20 dead Eyes 13 Inches @ 74 cents each	14	80
10 do do 7½ Inches @ 25 cents each	2	50
16 Thrible Blocks 10 Inches at 40 cents per mortes	19	20
To Bushing 48 Sheaves at 25 cents	12	0
To Cutting 10 Learge morteses at 150 cents each	15	0
To repairing 2 Spunyarn Venches @ 30 cents		60
18 Dead Eyes 9 Inches at 32 cents each	5	76
12 Do do 13 Inches @ 74 cents each	8	88
26 Single Blocks 7 Inches @ 20 cents each	5	20
2 Single Blocks 8 Inches @ 25 cents		50
2 Single do 11 Inches @ 63 cents	1	26
To Bushing 37 Sheaves at 25 cents each	9	25
To Cutting 9 large Morterses @ 150 cents each	13	50
7 Double Blocks 8 Inches @ 25 cents per mortes	3	50
12 Double do 7 Inches @ 20 cents per do	4	80
12 Single do 7 do @ 20 cents per do	2	40
1 Dead Block 5 Inches @ 16		16
1 Single do 6 do 16 cents		16
36 Harts 5 Inches @ 16 cents each	5	76
3 do 8 Inches @ 25 cents do		75
3 do 7 do @ 20 cents do		60
10 Single Blocks 12 Inches @ 60 cents each	6	
To Bushing 10 Sheaves @ 25 cents do	2	50
1 handspike 33 cents & Cutting 12 common morterses @ 33 ⅓ ea	4	33
To Cutting 16 learge morterses at 150 cents each	24	"
4 Sheaves 4½ Inches at 20 cents each		80
18 Pins at 6 cents & Cutting 2 large morterses @ 150 cents each	4	8
14 Sheaves 8½ Inches @ 30 cents & Bushing 14 sheaves at 25 do do	7	70
2 dead Eyes 7½ do at 25 do & 1 Boats role 40 cents		90
110 Feet of Pump at 75 cents per foot	82	50
To putting in 4 Brass Chambers at $1 each	4	0
To Cutting 4 common morterses at 33⅓ cents each	1	33⅓
To Cutting 4 large morterses at 150 cents each	6	"
To 4 Sheaves 6 Inches 4½ Inches thick at 40 cents each	1	60

To Cutting 6 large morterses at 150 cents each	9	0
To Cutting 2 Stoper holes at 100 cents each	2	“
2 Sheaves 8 Inches 2½ Inches thick at 50 cents	1	“
To Bushing 5 sheaves @ 25 cents each	1	25
35 Single Blocks 13 Inches @ 74 cents each	25	90
To Cutting 6 common morterses @ 33⅓ cents each	2	“
4 Cattridge formers at 40 cents each	1	60
4 Setts of large Pump Boxes @ 75 cents per sett	3	0
To Leathering 3 setts of pump boxes @ $1 each sett	3	0
1 Stump Truck		25
3 do do with 4 sheaves in each & fixing on at 157 cents each	3	71
2 Harts 10 Inches at 50 cents each, 3 Harts 13 Inches @ 74 cents ea	3	22
16 Captson Bars & fixing in at 75 cents each	12	“
To Cutting 2 large morterses @ 150 cents each	3	“
To Cutting 10 Scuppers on the scollop Deck at 25 cents each	2	50
To Cutting 26 do at $3 each	78	“
6 Pump Brakes at 34 cents each	2	4
4 Dead Eyes 7½ Inches @ 25 cents each	1	0
6 Single Blocks 9 Inches @ 32 cents each	1	92
To Bushing 4 Sheaves @ 25 cents each	1	0
30 double Blocks 7 Inches at 20 cents per mortes	12	“
30 Single do 7 do @ 20 cents per do	6	“
78 double do 8 do @ 25 do per do	39	“
78 Single do 8 do @ 25 do per do	19	50
3 Harts 7 Inches @ 20 cents each & 3 Harts 8 Inches @ 25 cents ea	1	35
1 dead Eye 6 inches 16 cents & Cutting 22 large morterses @ 150 do ea	33	16
To Coppering 16 large morterses at 150 cents each	24	“
8 Sheaves for Topmast heeles at 2 dollars each	16	“
2 do for Topmast do @ 1 dols	2	“
To Bushing 10 Sheaves @ 25 cents each	2	50
To Cutting 12 common morterses at 33⅓ cents each	4	“
To Coppering 12 do do @ 33⅓ do do	4	“
To Cutting 20 common do @ 33⅓ do do	6	66⅔
To Coppering 15 do do @ 33⅓ do do	5	“
To 1 Sheave 6 Inches 20 cents & 1 Pin 6 cents		26
To Cheeking a Gaff on Board	3	50
To 2 dead Eyes 7½ Inches at 25 cents & 1 hart 7 Inches @ 20 cents		70
2 Single Blocks 7 Inches @ 20 cents		40
4 Single do 6 do @ 16 cents		64
To Bushing 8 sheaves @ 25 cents each	2	“
2 Thrible Blocks 6 Inches @ 16 cents per mortes		96
6 double do 6 do @ 16 cents per do	1	92
6 Single do 6 do @ 16 cents per do		96
2 Dead Eyes 6 Inches @ 16 cents each		32
To Cutting 4 common morterses @ 33⅓ cents each	1	33⅓

2 Sheaves 4 Inches @ 14 cents & 2 pins at 6 cents each		40
To Coppering 2 common morterses @ 33⅓ cents each		66⅔
To Rimming 100 Belaying Pin holes @ 1 cent each	1	"
7 Handspikes at 33⅓ cents & 4 Shue Blocks 16 Inches @ $1 each	6	33⅓
4 Shue Blocks 14 Inches at 80 cents	3	20
1 Axx helve		25
½ days work done on board boaring Steering sail booms		60
6 Dozen Priming wire handles @ 33⅓ cents per doz	2	"
To Cutting 8 Common Morterses @ 33⅓ cents	2	66⅔
16 Pins @ 6 cents each & 8 Sheaves 6 Inches @ 25 cents each	2	96
2 large Serveing mallets @ 50 cents each	1	0
2 Small set of Pump boxes @ 50 cents each	1	0
8 Standards for thots in the Barge at 33⅓ each	2	66⅔
30 Gunners Mallets @ 25 cents each	7	50
2 Pipes for weel Ropes in the Deck at 50 Cents	1	"
4½ dozen of double Leading Trucks at $1 per dozen	4	50
1 Dozen of Thrible do do @ 150 cents per dozen	1	50
5½ dozen of Single do do @ 50 cents per doz	2	75
2 Pattent logreels at 233⅓ cents each	4	66⅔
9 Setts large pump Boxes @ 75 cents per Sett	6	75
4 Pump Breaks @ 34 cents each	1	36
To Cheeking Boom 350 cents & Cutting 2 large morterses @ 150 cents each	6	50
To Cutting 5 common morterses @ 33⅓ cents each	1	66⅔
To Coppering 2 common do @ 33⅓ cents each		66⅔
2 Sheaves 7 Inches @ 25 cents each & 21 Pins at 6 cents	1	76
2 Sheaves 8½ Inches thick at 36 cents each & 1 Sheave 4½ Inc 16 cents		88
36 Clappers at 1½ Cents each & 1 thrible 12 Inches @ 60 cents per mortes	1	14
2 Single Blocks 16 Inches @ 114 cents each	2	28

1799		Amount brought forward	$ 1355. 55
Novemr 2	By Cash	Cred.	200.
			1155.55

Salem Decem^{r} 31 1799 Received eleven hundred fifty fifty [sic] dollars, fifty five Cents, balance of the above, & have given duplicate Bills & Receipts—Receved payment Benjamin Felt

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– 3 –

D^{r} Capt Joseph Waters for the Essex Frigate to Benj^{a} Felt

To 14 dead Eyes 13 Inches at $1 each & 10 dead Eyes 7½ Inches @ 30 Cents ea	17.00
5 dead Eyes 6 Inches @ 20 cents each	1.00
24 Single Blocks 5 Inches @ 17 cents each	4.80
24 d^{o} d^{o} 6 Inches @ 20 cents each	4.80
24 d^{o} d^{o} 7 Inches @ 25 cents each	6.00

9 dozen of Single leading Trucks @ 50 cents per doz	4.50
2 Patent logreels @ 233⅓ Cents each & 8 Fids @ 50 cents each	8.66⅔
7 Setts of Large pump boxes at 75 cents per Sett	5.25
4 Pump Breaks : 34 cents each 6 double serving mallets @ $1 each	7.36
10 Large Serveing mallets @ 50 cents each	5.00
10 Common dº dº @ 25 cents	2.50
4 Sister Blocks 19 Inches @ 133⅓ per morters	10.66⅔
2 dº dº 14 Inches @ 67 cents	1.34
4 dº dº 11 Inches @ 55 cents	2.20
4 Harts 9 Inches @ 39 cents each, 2 Harts 10 Inches @ 50 cents ea	2.56
2 dº 13 Inch @ 9 cents each & 2 Harts 15 Inches @ 2 dols each	5.84
6 Shue Blocks 16 Inches @ $1 each	6.00
4 Fiddle Dº 20 Inches @ 2 dols each	8.00
2 Sheaves 4½ Inch @ 16 cents & 2 Snatch blocks 12 Inch @ 75 each	1.82
2 Snatch Blocks 18 Inches @ 175 cents each	3.50
2 Vial Ditto 24 Inches @ 3 dols each	6.00
4 Single Plank Blocks 17 Inches @ $5 per mortes	20.00
1 Thrible dº dº 16 Inches @ $5 dols per dº	15.00
6 Double dº dº 16 dº @ 5 dols per dº	60.00
2 double dº dº 16 dº @ 5 dols per dº	20.00
12 double Blocks 11 Inches at 63 cents per mortes	15.12
11 dº dº 9 Inches @ 39 cents per dº	8.58
17 dº dº 8 Inches @ 31 cents per mortes	10.54
15 Single dº 8 Inches @ 31 cents	4.65
2 dº dº 12 Inches @ 75 cents	1.50
To Bushing 137 Sheaves @ 25 cents each	34.25
24 handspikes at 33⅓ cents each	8.00
To Amount Carried Over	$ 312.44⅓
To 2 double Block shells plank 17 Inches @ 360 cents per mortes	14.40
1 Single dº dº 8 Inches @ 20 cents	.20
1 double dº dº 8 Inches @ 20 per mortes	.40
12 Single dº dº 9 Inches @ 25 cents	3.00
1 double dº dº 9 dº @ 25 dº	.50
66 Single dº dº 10 dº @ 33⅓ each	22.11
2 double dº dº 10 dº @ 33½ per mortes	1.34
11 Single dº dº 11 dº @ 40⅔ dº	4.47⅓
48 Single dº dº 12 dº @ 48 dº	23.40
1 Double dº dº 14 dº @ 70⅔	1.41⅓
26 dº Blocks 8 Inches at 31 cents per mortes	16.12
26 Single dº 8 Inches @ 31 cents dº	8.60
10 double dº 7 Inches @ 25 cents per mortes	5.00
10 Single dº 7 Inches @ 25 cents per dº	2.50
1 Lignumvita Powder Role	1.25
1 Hammer handle 6 cent & 1 Ads handle 6 cent	.12
400 Cannister shot Bottoms @ 9 cents each	36.00

7 Pair of Shave handles @ 10 Cents each	.70
3 Ads handles & 2 hammer handles @ 6 cents	.30
	$ 453.37
to leathering 1 Set of Boxes 66⅔	66⅔
to Reaming 4 pump 43½ For Filling the worter Casks	43½
	454.47
deduct overcharge on 66 Single Blocks	11
Received payment & for which have given duplicate Bills & Receipts Benjamin Felt	454.36

Caboose

(GALLEY STOVE)

A Patent Ships Hearth on a new Construction for a 32 Gun Vessell with Kitchen Range and folding top Bar-Sliding Spit Racks & trivett Bar 2 Cranes with Shifting Hooks to do which Serves the Range Fires 2 Ovens wch are heated without any Extra Fire being placed between the Range & Boilers Fire 2 Wro^{t} Iron Kettles tinned inside with Covers to each, 2 Brass Screw'd Cocks with Sett Screws to Each fitted to the Screw'd Iron Pipes of the Boilers which Screws off for the Convenience of taking out the Boilers if required A Flew all round the Boilers without any Brick Tile or Lead Work—One Iron Chimney or Funnell which receives the Flews of the Range & Boilers Fire with large Copper Elbow or Hood with two Handles & round Sliding Plate for the Mouth of do which prevents the Wind blowing down A Smoak Jack with Friction Wheels & bearers &c fixed in the Funnal of the Hearth 2 Spits with Iron Wheels & Collars to do & One with Crank Handle—Iron Handle for Jack—1 Tormentor, 1 Ladle, 1 Poker, Shovell, Thongs, Rake. 1 Sett Screws, Iron front Pan with deep Rim 2 Triangular trivetts for do 4 large Screw'd Bolts & nutts for fixing the Hearth to the Deck—A Cast Iron additional bottom for the Hearth to Stand upon, instead of Stone Paving, with Bearers under do which gives Water Passage under the Whole by which means the Deck can be always kept Cool & free from danger 2 Iron Stewing Pans for do to hang or Stand on deck with Grates inside and triangular trivetts to do . . . for . . . [£] 200.3.0

Cannon

Dimensions of carriages in 1809

[Josiah Fox Papers, No. 950] See Fig. 52.

	ft	in
Length of Cariage	4	5¾
Breadth of Fore part of Bracket	1	9
Dº of After part of Dº		10½
Brackets sided		4⅜
Beadth of Transom		11
Dº sided		4⅜
Dº of fore part of Cariage	1	9¾
Dº of After part of Dº	2	3¼
Fore Axle tree fore & aft		5
Dº Deep		7½
After truck in Diameter	1	2
fore Dº in do	1	4
After Axle tree fore & aft	1	–
Dº Deep		4¾
Bed Bolt in Diameter		⅞
Trun thick		4½
Breach ring in the clear		4
Bolts through bracket, in diameter		¾
Eye bolts in after end of Bracket in the clear		1¾
Dº in after part of after axle tree in the clear		1⅞
Bolt through transom in diameter		¾
Trunnion hole in diameter		5

Cannon, weight of, 1799

From Stephen Higginson & Company:

12-pounders

[Cwt]	[Qtrs]	[lbs]
28	1	24
28	1	3
28	1	3
29	3	1
29	1	20
29	3	1
29	1	20
28	1	6

6-pounders

[Cwt]	[Qtrs]	[lbs]
15	0	7
15	0	4
15	0	7
15	0	4
14	3	0
14	3	4
14	3	7
14	3	7
14	3	0
14	3	3

From the Boston Frigate Committee (12-pounders):

25	2	0	25	1	21
23	3	0	25	2	0
25	2	7	25	1	14
23	2	14	25	2	14
23	2	0	25	1	14
25	2	0	25	2	7
25	2	0	25	2	0
25	0	14	25	1	7
25	1	0	25	1	21

Capstans

Dimensions of capstans in 1809

[Josiah Fox Papers, No. 950] See Figs. 54 and 55

	[ft] [in]
Diameter of Drum head	3.11
Drum head thick	.10½
Large hoop in diameter	3. 6
Meat [sic] in do	1.11¼
Length of Bar holes	1.–
Holes athwartships	. 5
Hole in Drum head for head of Barrel square	1. 2
Length of Whelp	3. 8
Whelps fore & aft at heel	. 7½
Dº fore & aft just below the mouldings	. 5¼
Dº Athwartships at heel	. 6½
Barrel in diameter	1. 4
Spindles in diameter between the two Capstans	. 5¾
Dº at Head	. 4
Dº at Heel	. 4

Circular Letters to Navy Agents

Navy Department
Accountants Office March 18th 1799

Sir

The Secretary of the Navy haveing appointed you Naval agent at Salem I take the liberty of incloseing for your government, the copy of a circular letter, written to the several Naval Agents on the 18th of October last explanatory of two forms for stateing their expenditures copies of which are also inclosed: together with another circular letter to the said agents of the 14 instant respecting Store accounts

I have the honor to be
Your very humble servant
William Winder

Circular to Navy Agents

Navy Department
Accountants Office 18th October 1798

Sir

The Secretary of the Navy having found it necessary that the several Navy Agents should render weekly accounts of their transactions, has instructed me to transmit to you, a form prescribing the mode in which these weekly accounts should be rendered.

The system prescribed to, and adopted in this Office, for arranging the expenditures in the department, require that the expence of each vessell be kept distinct, and also that the several articles of expence, should be kept distinct, as they fall under one, or the other, of the following heads. Viz

Hire of Tradesmen, labourers, houses, &c
Materials for building, & Equipment
Ship Stores
Provisions
Ordnance & Military Stores
Hospital Stores
Slop Clothing
Clothing for Marines
Recruiting Expences
Pay of the Navy

It will therefore be necessary, in all transactions in the Navy Department, to keep those distinctions in view, and to state the accounts comformable thereto.

The enclosed formes for weekly statements, are framed on the principles of this system, conformably to which, you will send on the weekly accounts, that the Secretary of the Navy has requested you to transmitt.

Number 1, is the forme in which you will render your first Summary Statement, to commence on the first day of November next: at which time it will be necessary that you ascertain what money advanced by you on account (if any) remaines unsettled, and also, the sum that remaines in your hands unapplyed. This Statement may close, on the first Saturday in November, or if more convenient (that being but the fraction of a week) may extend to the second Saturday, when it must close, and the balances transmitted to Number

2. Which is the forme, in which all your succeeding weekly Statements will be made.

The several heads of Expenditure that your statement comprehends, must be accompanied by abstracts, corresponding therewith in their amount, and in their detail, by the vouchers by which they must be supported.

With a view to explain the particular objects of the several heads of Expenditure, before enumerated, it may be useful to make some remarks thereon, and to enumerate certain articles that some of the heads (particularly the three first, which it is conceived stand most in need of illustration) are intended to embrace.

Hire of Tradesmen, labourers, &c will comprehend the hire of all workmen, & labourers, and the provisions, or liquors that may be allow'd them in addition to their wages, also the hire of waggons, Carts, Drays, Shallops, Lighters, Stages, or other Machines, or utensils, freight rent of Houses, wharves &c, employed, used, or occupied, for the purpose of building, rigging, equiping repairing, watering, or balasting, a Vessell, but will not include the Wages of any of the vessells Crew, as that belongs properly to the head of Pay of the Navy, nor will this head comprehend Blacksmiths, Blockmakers, Mastmakers, Plumers, and other bills, where the tradesmen find materials, as the articles they produce, will come more properly under the next head, as wrought Materials.

Materials &c will comprehend all materials, whither raw, or wrought, expended in building, Equiping, rigging, or repairing a Vessell, as Timber, Pitch, Tar, Copper, Paints, Cables, Anchors, Spars, Boats, Cordage, Canvas, &c, also Blacksmith, Blockmakers, Sailmakers, Plumers, and other bills, where the raw materials, and workmanship are blended, to produce an impliment, or article expended, in the building &c, as before mentioned. But as more articles of this discription will be purchased & charged to a vessells than will be immediately expended in the building, Equiping rigg^{g} &c of it; such as spar Canvas, Cordage, Blocks, Hooks, Nails, bolts &c these as far as it is practicable, should be distinguished from the expended, and omitting them under this head comprehend them under the next.

Ship Stores. The object of this head, are all materials utensils, tools, or articles of value, charged to a vessell, and not finally applyed, or expended and ought therefore to be hereafter accounted for by the proper Officers, either as expended, or on hand, such as iron balast, water casks, Tubs, Pails, Pots, Kettles, cabin furniture, and utensels, Maps, Charts, flags, Compasses, Talescopes, &c and all tools Stores &c for the vessell, whatever Officer is to have the charge Except provisions, Clothing, Gunners Stores & Surgeon's Stores, which belongs to other heads.

Provisions. will comprehend all articles of provision, & liquors, Except those provided for the Sick, and delivered to the Surgeon, and if the Secretary of the Navy should direct the Agents, to settle with any Officer for undrawn rations, the money will be charged under this head, as Subsistence.

Ordnance & Military Stores. will comprehend Cannon, with their appertenances, small arms, amunition, and all other Military or warlike Stores, and all the stores committed to the charge of the Gunner.

Hospital Stores. will comprehend Surgeons Instruments, medicines, and stores of all sorts, committed to the Charge of the Surgeon, and all expences of the Sick that may be allow'd.

Recruiting Expences. If the agents should be instructed by the Secretary of the Navy, to settle the accounts of any recruiting Officer, the expenditures allowed (except advances of pay) will be charged under this head.

The remaining heads of Slop Clothing, Clothing for Marines, and Pay of the Navy, it is presumed requier no explanation.

As the Service may at times, render it necessary to advance money before the supplies are received, or at least before the account thereof is fully adjusted and settled, and althou' advances of this kind, are not to be stated in your acc^ts^ as expenditures, but as they are settled and vouchers obtained; yet as they will affect the balances of your Cash account, two columns are introduced into the enclosed forms, to exhibit the progress of this business, and shew what part of the sums advanced on account remains unsettled at the end of each week, and thereby afford the means of regularly ascertaining the balance of public money that may actually [be] in your hands, or that you may be in advance for the public at the end of each week. This is the use of the two first Columns, and it is immaterial whither the sums in the second column are placed opposite the respective heads for which they were expended, as in the form No 1 or collectively opposite the advances on account, as in N^o^ 2, for there is no connection between this and the expenditure Column, which will contain the services, and supplies settled & paid for within the week, and whither the payment was made at the instant, or had been previously made as an advance; will make no difference, as to the expenditure column, to which alone the abstracts & vouchers before mentioned will apply. The last column will exhibit three receipts Expenditures, advances, and balances of Cash for each week.

The enclosed statements suppose a balance of public money actually in the hands of the agent, but it may sometimes happen that an Agent will be in advance for the public, in this Case the balance will change sides, but as it is conceived the Agent will be at no loss in varying his statement conformable thereto, neither of the forms exhibit an example in this Case.

I am Sir
your most obdt Servt
WILLIAM WINDER
Acco^tt^ of the Navy

Circular to the Navy Agents

Navy Department
Accountant's Office March 14th 1799

The act of Congress by which this Office was instituted charges the Accountant with the settlement of all accounts for Moneys advanc'd and Stores issued or distributed by or under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy.

To perform what this Act requires, it will not only be necessary by proper accounts and vouchers to shew the payment or expenditure of Money: but will also be necessary by a separate System of accounts to trace the articles that may be purchased with that money to their final application or expenditure.

With respect to the mode of stating and rendering the Money accounts the Several Navy Agents have already been advised, and for such articles as shall appear by these accounts and the vouchers accompanying them not only to have been bought and paid for by the Agent, but also to have been finally applied expended or delivered over to some other Agent or Officer, who may account for the Expenditure, no further account of them from the purchasing Agent will be expected: but for such articles as they shall shew thay have purchased, but do not shew that they have applied, expended or delivered over, and all articles they may receive from other Agents, from Officers or from Ships it is expected they will render a further Account, not in their account of Cash expenditures, (for when an Article is once purchased for the Department, it is never again to appear in any account of Cash expenditures) but in a sett of Store accounts.

I have said, that when an Article is applied or expended, no farther account of it will be expected; but this must be confined to cases where the application or expenditure is final: for it is probable that Materials will be purchased or delivered, and considered as immediately applied to a Vessel that may be building repairing or rigging, but a part of the Materials may nevertheless when those operations are completed, remain unexpended, such as Timber, plank, cordage, canvas, iron materials &c, in those cases the application is not final, and an inventory of the remaining articles should be taken, and a list of such of them as are taken on board the vessel as Stores, (to be afterwards expended,) should be acknowledged by the Commanding Officer and returned to this Office, that the Officers of the Vessel may be held to account for them; and those not taken on board the Ship should return to the custody of the Agent and be entered in his Store Accounts, in order that the final expenditure may be shewn by him.

The object of these Store accounts will be to exhibit a clear & distinct view of the number or quantities of each several kind of Article purchased, and not immediately expended or delivered, and also of those received by the respective Agents, arranged in appropriate columns. And a corresponding view of the Articles expended or delivered by them; shewing also from whom purchased or received, and how, and to whom expended or delivered. And it will be proper to introduce a Money column into each page of those accounts, and state therein, the known cost or estimated value of the articles contained in the other Columns.

Monthly copies or abstracts of these accounts, exhibiting the quantities of the several articles on hand at the beginning of the Month, and the quantities purchased & received within the Month: and also a statement of the articles expended and delivered within the Month, shewing for what Vessel with vouchers for the delivery, and ascertaining the quantities remaining on Hand at the end of the Month shoud be forwarded to this office in order that the expenditure or delivery may be charged to the proper account or Person.

I am sir your most obedient
& humble servant
WILLIAM WINDER
Accountant of the Navy

Joseph Waters Esq^{r}
Navy Agent Salem

(Circular) Navy Department 1st Jany 1800

Sir

I am requested by the Accountant of this department to transmit you a *Form* for the return of your Store Accounts in future.

It is hoped this may be adopted so as to produce uniformity and at the same time facility in arrangeing and entering the articles of each return, into the *genrl Store Books of this Office.*

You will observe that all the articles purchased *for Cash* within the month (not applied or expended) may be entered in one line thro' the Appropriate columns, giving the No of the Vouchers for such, as enterd in your Sumery Statement, and the Amount of their Value in the column next appropriated for "cost or estimated Value."

When Articles are received from other Stores or Agents, or from Vessels of War, it is expected you will give their Value, if you have any documents to shew it—or if in your power to estimate the value from any information you may have, it will be desirable.

In Store Accounts where the Articles are numerous, it wou'd also be desirable, that they be carried into the appropriate colums alphabetically.

You will observe to continue the balance on Hand from one return to another—And also you will please be particular in returning vouchers for all articles delivered, regularly numbered.

I will beg leave to refer you to the circular letter from this Office, dated 14 Mar[ch] last, for more particular explanation of the Store Accounts—and by that you will observe that the Objects of the Store Accounts, are to exhibit a clear and distinct view of the number quantity and Value of the Several kinds of Articles purchased *and not immediately expended or delivered*—and also of those received from other Stores and Vessels, as far as may be in appropriate columns.

I am
Sir
Your Mo Obet Servt
GEO McDANIEL
Clerk of the Store Accos

(Circular)

Navy Department
Accountants Office
February 15 1800

It is necessary for me to Observe to you, that Accounts for Contingent, or indefinite expenses, must *all* be adjusted at this office *only*—the Navy Agents have, in many instances, undertaken to settle, and allow accounts of this kind, and even to pay officers, for their Travelling & Recruiting Expences &c, such Accounts can only be allowed, under particular Circumstances, and of which this Department *alone*, must Judge of the *propriety*.

Respectfully
I am [etc.]
THOS TURNER
Acct

(Circular)

Navy Department
Accountants Office
February 20th 1800

Joseph Waters Esq^r
Salem

Sir

To authorize the payment, of allotments of pay, made by any person belonging to the Ships of the United States—it will be necessary for the Attornies, to Deposit with you, a power of attorney properly Executed in the presence of the Captain, and Registered by the Purser.

The Powers must always Express the Sum or proportion of pay to be received, and the time when to Commence.

Upon your making any Such payments, you will be carefull to take Duplicate Receipts, charging the amount to the Purser of the Ship, as so much paid A.B. attorney of C.D. on Account of allotments of pay.

These Transactions may be included, in your general Account of Receipts and Expenditures, and with your monthly Summary Statements you will forward to this office one of the Receipts, as in case of other Vouchers—as also a particular Abstract of all payments made on account of allotments of pay, during the month.

Upon the arrival of the Ship, or whenever the payments are to cease, the powers of attorney, must all be forwarded to this office.

I have the Honor to be [etc.]
THO TURNER
Acc^t

Constructor's Bills

– 1 –

1799

Sept^{t} 30 M^{r} William Gray M^{r} Jacob Ashton Capt^{t} Ichabod Nichols M^{r} John Norris Capt^{t} Benjamin Hoges As a Comitte for the Subscribers of the Town of Salem for Building a Friget for the United States, Debtors in account To Enos Briggs

To the Hull of a Ship of 850 Tons At 30 Doll pr Ton	Doll^{s}	25500.00
to 1000 ft of Boards to make the Molds for the Ship		16.26
to 25½ Days work of my men at Makeing the molds for the Ship @ 6/6		27.62
to 245 ft of thick Plank Deliverd Mr Richardson for the Head & Gallerys $80		19.60
to 3 knees for Cheeks for the Head i had of Sam^{l} Simons 12 Doll		36.00
to 7 tons 22 feet timber for the Head Deliverd Richardson 7 Dolls		52.83
to 2 tons 34 ft Pine timber to D^{o} 5 Dol		14.25
to 2 knees 12 feet		2.50
to 18 ft timber		3.17
to 11¼ Days Sawing of the Stuff for the Ships head & Stern work by 2 men 16/		29.68
to head rails got out for d^{o}		4.00
to haulling timber & Carting Carve work and Blocks for the Ship		2.00
to Seting the Head Pump 4 Day 9/		6.00
to 21 Days work at makeing the Steearing Wheel 9/		30.50
to Stuff for D^{o}		7.00
to Hanging the Ships Bell		6.00
		26257.56
To 317 feet 2½ Plank for Ladders and Stern moldings		11.00½
to 10 Capstand Bars 75 C[ents]		7.50
to one Peace of thick Stuff for a Supporter to the foremast		1.10

to 28 men from a 11 OClock till 3 Dº after the Ships Cable 75 C	21.00
to fiting the molds for the rudder bands	3.50
to 21 Days work for one man Clearing Chips out of the Ships hole	26.25
to the use of my Gondelo 1½ Days Landing Boards & Ballace	1.50
to 2¾ Gallons of rum Delivd to Joinars before the Ships rum Came Down	3.25
to 2 Gallons rum 12 Doz Lemons the Committe gave the Carpenters Election Day	6.00
to 2 Days work Plaining Deck Plank and Anchor Stock	3.00
Ship to 38 weeks & 1 Days Boarding the Ships People 15/	95.30
to 18 weeks Board of Andrew Hacket	45.00
to 103½ weeks Board of the first Gang of Joinors 18/	310.50
to 43½ weeks Board 2d Gang of Joinas 18/	130.50
to the Lanching Diner	
to foot Brought over	26257.56
	26908.57
	198.33

– 2 –

1799

The Committee for Building the Friget Essex

Dr to Enos Briggs

Nov. 11	To 42 Days work on the Alteration of the Cable Bits and repairing the gang Boards @ 9/	$63.00
	to 65 ft timber for Do – 7 Doll	11.38
	to 35 ft of 3½ Plank for Do	3.50
	to Jonathan Robarts Bill While caulking the alteration work	6.67
	to 2 Pins for purchase Blocks	0.50
	to straping a snatch Block	8.00
	to 96 wt of iron for the blacksmiths shop at the Yard 11 Cents	10.56
	To Elijah Briggs time & expence to Milton	

after floor timbers omitted in the first bill 3 days	4.50
to his expence on Ditto	4.83
	112.94

– 3 –

The Committee for building Essex Frigate

To Enos Briggs D^{r}

1799				Dollars Cents
Decem^{r}	To Building the Essex Frigate per Contract 850 Tons at $30			25,500 —
	" Allowance of $1 per Ton for putting extra Carpenters to expedite the Building			850 —
	" 1 m̄ Feet Clear Boards			16.26
	" 245 Feet thick Plank for Head & Galleries at $80			19.60
	" 3 Knees for Cheeks for the Head	at $12	$ 36.—	
	" 7 Tons 22 feet Timber for ditto	" 7	52.85	
	" 2 " 34 Pine Timber "	" 5	14.25	
	" 2 Knees	1.25	2.50	
	" 18 Feet Timber		3.17	
	" Stuff for Head Rails		4.—	
	" " for the Steering Wheel		7.—	
	" 317 Feet 2½ in. plank for Ladders & Stern Mould^{g} at 2½^{d}		11.—	
	" 10 Capstain Bars	at 75 Cts	7.50	
	" 1 Piece thick Stuff for supporters of Foremast		1.10	
	" 90 Feet Timber for spare Anchor Stocks		15.75	155.12
	" 132 Feet 2 in plank for Hammock Cleets		7.18	
	" 82 " 4 " "		13.65	
	" 34 " 3 " "		3.73	
	" 35½ " Timber for spare Trussel Trees		6.12	
	" 22 " 5½ in plank for spare Cross Trees		5.5–	
	" 25½ " Timber for spare Main Cap		4.37	
	" 7 Spare Handspikes		7.—	
	" 27 Feet Spruce Timber		2.62	
	" 65 " Timber for altering the Cable Bitts at $7		11.38	
	" 35 " 3½ in plank for ditto		3.50	
	" 2 Pins for purchase Blocks		.50	
	" 96 lb Iron & working ditto for Blacksmiths Shop at the Yard	at 11 Cents	10.56	75.66
				$ 26616.64

Received payment, at different times, & for which
have given duplicate Bills & Receipts
Salem December 31st 1799 Enos Briggs

– 4 –

Capt Joseph Waters Naval Agent For the Ship Essex

Dr to Enos Briggs

Dec 25	to 32 D[a]ys boarding your men while battening the ships yards	$13.33
	to 90 ft of timber for anchor stocks	15.75
	to 82 ft of 4 inch plank	13.65
	to 132 ft of 2 inch plank for hammoc cleats	7.18
	to 34 ft of 3 inch plank	3.73
	to 35½ ft of timber for trusseltrees	6.12
	to 22 ft of 5½ inch plank for Crosstrees	5.50
	to 10 Days work of Gowen & Robarts caulking platforms & gang boards @ 10/	16.67
	to 25½ ft of timber for a main Cap	4.37
	to 7 spare handspikes	7.00
	to 27 ft of spruce timber	2.62
	to 62½ dys Extra work such as makeing 3 anchor Stocks—Stocking 2 anchors—a bulk head in The hole—and fishes for the mast—& hammoc cleats—fixing iron Standards In the tops and railing the same—Altering skuttles in the Forecastle and Lower Deck ditto and 8/6 Sundry Small Jobs	88.54

– 5 –

The Committee for building Essex Frigate

To Enos Briggs Dr

1799		Dollars Cents
Decemr	To 180 Weeks 2⅓ days Boarding & Lodging of Joiners at $3	154.—
"	" 25½ days Work making molds for the Ship, they being left in the hands of the Constructor of the Ship	27.62
"	" 22½ " Sawing Stuff for the Ships Head & Stern Work at $1.33⅓	30.—
"	" Carting Carv'd Work for the Ship	2.—
"	" 4 days Setting the Head Pump at $1.50	6.—
"	" 21 days making the Ships Wheel	31.50
"	" Fixing & hanging the Ships Bell	6.—
"	" Fitting the Moulds for the Rudder Band	3.50
"	" 21 days Clearing the Chips out of the Ships Hold	26.25
"	" 28 Men assisting to bring Cables on board the Ship	21.—

“	“ 1½ days Hire of Gundalo, landing Boards & Ballast	1.50
“	“ 2¾ Gallons Rum dld the Joiners	3.25
“	“ Liquor for the Carpenters Election day per your orders	6.—
“	“ 2 days Work planeing Deck plank & Anchor Stock	3.—
“	“ 42 “ “ altering the Cable Bitts & altering the Gang Boards	63.—
“	“ Gowing & Roberts Bill caulking the alter'd Work	23.34
“	“ Strapping a Snatch Block by my Blacksmith	8.—
“	“ Elijah Briggs expences to Milton after Timber	9.33
“	“ 62 days extra work, making Anchor Stocks, spare Fishes for the lower Masts, fixing Iron Standards in the Tops, & Railing the same altering Scuttles in the Forecastle & lower Deck (the above being done by Capt Prebles orders).	87.83
“	“ Amount of expences for Launching Dinner per your orders	195.08
		1095.20

Received payment, at different times, & for which have given duplicate Bills & Receipts.—

Salem December 31st 1799 Enos Briggs

Cordage

[Dimensions of Cordage in the handwriting of William Hackett]

fath^{ms}	Inches	for what use	[Cwt]–[Qtrs]–[lbs]
140	8½	Lower Shrouds	18–0– 0
22	13	main Stay	8–2– 7
22	9½	Spring Stay	4–1–18
80	5½	M^{n} Top Shrouds	4–3– 7
120	6¼	M^{n} Top Back Stays	10–3–14
60	3¼	M^{n} T. Gall^{t} Shrouds	2–0–11
80	3¾	M. T. Gall^{t} Back Stays	1–2–16
60	6	M^{n} Topsail Sheets	2–3– 0
40	6¼	M^{n} Top Stay hawser Laid	3–2–10
40	5½	D^{o} Spring Stay	4–3– 5
			4–3–16
60	6	Topsail Tyes	4–3–21
60	6	Guner for Brechings	5–0– 0
		3 Coils of 3¼ Inches	3–1– 2
		4 Ditto of 3	1–2– 6
		6 Coils of Spunyarn 6 Yarns	1–3–21
		5 Ditto of 4 Ditto	
		1 Ditto of 2	
		1 Ditto of 3	
		1 Coils of 60 Fathom 5¾ Four Strands	

Crew's Pay Allotments

Navy Department
25 March 1800

Sir

Enclosed is a list of all the men belonging to the Essex who have left powers of Attorney authorizing their assignees to receive certain portions of their pay in their absence.

This list shows the period at which payment on the powers of attorney shall commence, the duration of that power, and the [illegible] to which it entitles the assignee.

You will be pleased to take upon yourself the payment of them and advertise in the news papers for the persons haveing such powers to apply to you Mr Turner, accountant of this Department will point out to you the mode of keeping the accounts, and taking receipts altho this list is signed by the Captain and purser it is still necessary that each power be attested by their signatures.

It will be proper to suspend further payment whenever you hear of the arrival of this Ship in any port of the United States, and to send to this department, and to the purser immediately, an account of all the monies paid on the powers, that the proper stoppages may be made in a settlement with the men; and to recollect that the men enlist for twelve months, and receive two months advance—of course that not more than ten months half pay ought to be made on any power of attorney.

I have the honor to be sir
Yr Obed Sevt
Ben Stoddert

Joseph Waters Esqr

Abstract of Advances, on account of Allotments made by the Crew of the Essex Frigate

Isaac Collyer	Attorney to	Thomas Curtis	$ 25.50
Samuel Jennison	“	John Morris	27.
Henry Leach	“	Moses Walker	21.
Henry Leach	“	Joseph Newhall	27.
Henry Leach	“	Ashael Page	18.
Joseph Whittemore	“	Stephen Stimpson	27.
Elizabeth Martin	“	Joseph Martin	30.
James Wittemore	“	Moses Hariman	21.
Sarah Stimson	“	Charles Stimson	24.
Andrew Ober	“	Richard Hogan	18.
James Whittemore	“	George Clark	21.
Susannah Major	“	Charles Mitchell	25.50
Gustavus Sargent	“	James Haraden	25.50
Mary Benson	“	Francis Benson	30.
Racheal Trafford	“	William Trafford	25.50
Mary Gray	“	Benjamin Gray	25.50

Sarah Dalton	“	John Dalton	16.50
Gustavus Sargent	“	James Day	25.50
Mary Carrico	“	John Carrico	25.50
Stephen Putnam	“	David Putnam	19.50
Abigail Barr	“	William Barr	25.50
Sarah Callum	“	David Callum	15.
Samuel Bishop	“	Thomas Whitlock	18.
Samuel Dean	“	Thomas Jones	25.50
Zebulun Millet	“	Zebulun S. Millet	25.50
Susannah Smith	“	James Smith	21.
Alice Butler	“	Benja Butler	25.50
Martha Gale	“	Samuel Gale	25.50
Martha Gale	“	Samuel Gale Junr	15.
Hannah Tuttle	“	Thomas Webb	18.
Lovell Stone	“	Benjamin Stone	21.
Sarah Neal	“	James Neal	25.50
Hannah Brien	“	Thomas Brien	21.
Seth Macmannas	“	John West	25.50
Saml Dean	“	Michael Dean	25.50
Betsey Masury	“	John Masury	18.
Elizabeth Douglas	“	John Douglas	27.
Betsey Masury	“	Samuel Masury	30.
Jonathan Kimball	“	Moses Hodgkins Jr	25.50
Jonathan Kimball	“	James Woodberry	25.50
Jonathan Hodges	“	Samuel C. Ward	37.50
Daniel Reed	“	John Glover	25.50
Enoch Burnham	“	Moses Burnham	19.50
Sally Johnson	“	William Johnson	25.50
Hannah Robinson	Attorney to	John Robinson	$ 25.50
Elizabeth Burnham	“	Moses Burnham	25.50
Henry Leach	“	Francis Barker	25.50
Hannah Boilston	“	James Jones	21.
Jonthan Lee	“	Samuel Thomas	25.50
Mary McMillan	“	John Daniels	15.
Hannah Martin	“	Isaac Martin	21.
Alice Homan	“	Edward Homan	25.50
Ann Gardner	“	Jonathan Gardner	12.
Margaret Lassel	“	Richard Eustice	15.
Eleanor Reed	“	William Besley Reed	30.
Hannah Boylston	“	James Sparrow	25.50
Sethe Macmannas	“	Patricus Macmannas	22.50
Lydia Knowlton	“	Joseph Knowlton	25.50
Henry Leach	“	William Trefry	25.50

Ann Wallace	"	James Wallace	27.
Henry Leach	"	William Barnes	18.
Betsey Haskel	"	Isaac Burnham	18.
Sarah Melzard	"	George Melzard	25.50
Hannah Carnes	"	James Fowler	22.50
Ann Knowland	"	Andrew Knowland	27.
Joseph Very	"	William Very	21.
Nancy Lissel	"	John Lissel	25.50
Sarah Lakeman	"	William Lakeman	25.50
			1596.

Salem May 31 1800
Joseph Waters Naval Agent

Joseph Waters

[Note: *Crew's Pay Allotments* continued on the following four pages.]

No. on the Ships Books	Men's Names	Rank	Monthly wages	Monthly sum alloted	Time the first allotment is payable	Number of months it may continue	At what Port to be paid	Time the allotment was executed	Persons authorized to receive it
72.	James Harraden	Seaman	17.	8.50	Febr 20	10	Salem	Novr 30	Emma Harraden
77.	James Woodbery	ditto	17.	8.50	23	“	ditto	“	Jonathan Kimball
51.	James Day junr	ditto	17.	8.50	12	“	ditto	“	Gustavus Sargent
190.	Samuel Clarke junr	Boy	12.	6.	20	“	ditto	“	Samuel Clarke
78.	Moses Hodgkins	Seaman	17.	8.50	23	“	ditto	“	Jonathan Kimball
84.	Samuel Thomas	ditto	17.	8.50	March 1	“	ditto	“	Rachel Thomas
105.	Michael Dean	ditto	17.	8.50	3	“	ditto	Decr 3	Samuel Dean
102.	John Jackson	ditto	17.	8.50	“	“	ditto	“	James Sweetser
99.	Moses Burnham	ditto	17.	8.50	1	“	ditto	4	Elizabeth Burnham
167.	Moses Burnham junr	Ordy Seaman	13.	6.50	“	“	ditto	“	Enoch Burnham
101.	Thomas Curtis	Seaman	17.	8.50	Febr 2	“	ditto	“	Isaac Collyer
115.	William Trefry	ditto	17.	8.50	“	“	ditto	“	Mary Greene
140.	David Putnam	Boy	13.	6.50	25	“	ditto	“	Stephen Putnam
121.	James Livingston	Arms Mate	17.	8.50	March 4	“	ditto	“	Amey Livingston
53.	Timothy Hodgkins	Qur Master	17.	8.50	“	“	ditto	“	Eunice Hodgkins
103.	Samuel Gale	Seaman	17.	8.50	3	“	ditto	5	Martha Gale
194.	Richard Eustis	Boy	10.	5.	Febr 26	“	ditto	“	Margaret Lassel
79.	William Burr	Seaman	17.	8.50	“	“	ditto	“	Abigail Burr
40.	Andrew Knowland	Cook	18.	9.	3	“	ditto	6	Ann Knowland
184.	Thomas Webb	Ordy Seaman	12.	6.	March 5	“	ditto	7	Hannah Tuttle
67.	Charles Mitchell	Seaman	17.	8.50	Febr 12	“	ditto	7	Susanna Majer
168.	Thomas Whitick	Ordy Seaman	12.	6.	March 1	“	ditto	“	Samuel Bishop
129.	Moses Harriman	ditto	14.	7.	Febr 16	“	ditto	“	Ann Harriman
195.	James Spafford	ditto	11.	5.50	25	“	ditto	“	Fanny Spear
dischargd	George Stevens	Qur Master	17.	8.50	12	“	ditto	“	Margaret Stevens
41.	James Wallace	Master at Arms	18.	9.	11	“	ditto	“	Ann Wallace
206.	Walter Butler	Boy	11.	5.50	March 7	“	ditto	“	John Butler

35.	William Patterson	Gunners Mate	20.	10.	Febr	12	“	ditto		“	Susanna Majer
55.	John Morris	Qur Master	18.	9.	Decr	30	“	ditto		“	Juanna Morris & Samuel Jennison
92.	James Niel	Seaman	17.	8.50	March	5	“	ditto		“	Sarah Niel
154.	Thomas Brien	Ordy Seaman	14.	7.	March	6	10	Salem	Decr	7	Hannah Brien
28.	Francis Benson	Masters Mate	20.	10.	Febr	21	“	ditto		9	Mary Benson
207.	Samuel Sylvester	Boy	12.	6.	March	10	“	ditto		11	Timothy Hodgkins
128.	Richard Hogan	ditto	12.	6.	Febr	12	“	ditto		“	Anna Hogan
76.	John Carrico	Seaman	17.	8.50		23	“	ditto		“	Mary Carrico
27.	William Besley Reed	Masters Mate	20.	10.		7	“	ditto		“	Eleanor Reed
54.	William Lakeman	Qur Master	17.	8.50		18	“	ditto		12	Sarah Lakeman
48.	William Trafford	Seaman	17.	8.50		19	“	ditto		“	Rachel Trafford
37.	Stephen Stimson	Carpes Mate	18.	9.	Janr	3	“	ditto		“	Joseph Whittemore
126.	Thomas Burk	Boy	14.	7.	Febr	12	“	ditto		“	Herbert Woodbery
45.	John Lessel	Seaman	17.	8.50		26	“	ditto		“	Ann Lessel
5.	Rufus Low	Sailing Master	40.	20.	March	1	“	ditto		“	Suckey Low
138.	Isaac Burnham	Ordy Seaman	12.	6.	Febr	23	“	ditto		13	Polly Burnham
52.	Joseph Knowlton	Qur Master	17.	8.50	March	9	“	ditto		14	Lydia Knowlton
164.	William S. Fretch	Ordy Seaman	14.	7.		12	“	ditto		“	Joseph Baker
95.	Jonathan Kendall	Seaman	17.	8.50		10	“	ditto		“	Hannah Kendall
96.	James Story	ditto	17.	8.50		“	“	ditto		“	Sarah Story
202.	William Hodgkins	Boy	10.	5.		11	“	ditto		“	Mary Hodgkins
110.	Zebulon S. Millet	Seaman	17.	8.50		7	“	ditto		“	Zebulon Millet
163.	George Lane	ditto	14.	7.		9	“	ditto		“	Mary Lane
191.	John Dalton	Boy	11.	5.50	Febr	22	“	ditto		“	Sarah Dalton
203.	David Callum	ditto	10.	5.		29	“	ditto		“	Sarah Callam
177.	Jonas Jones	Ordy Seaman	14.	7.	March	10th	“	ditto		“	Hannah Boylston
186.	Jonathan Garner	Boy	8.	4.	Febr	14	“	ditto		“	Ann Garner
185.	John Daniels	ditto	10.	5.		18	“	ditto		“	Mary McMillian
42.	Joseph Newhall	Armourer	18.	9.		12	“	ditto		“	Rachel Newhall
88.	William Johnson	Seaman	17.	8.50	March	2	“	ditto		“	Elizabeth Welker
204.	Samuel Gale junr	Boy	10.	5.	March	3	“	ditto		“	Martha Gale
181.	Isaac Martin	Ordy Seaman	14.	7.	March	14	10	Salem	Decr	14	Hannah Martin
47.	John West	Qur Master	17.	8.50		10	“	ditto		“	Sethe McManus
157.	Patricus McManus	WR Steward	15.	7.50		“	“	ditto		“	ditto

No. on the Ships Books	Men's Names	Rank	Monthly wages	Monthly sum alloted	Time the first allotment is payable	Number of months it may continue	At what Port to be paid	Time the allotment was executed	Persons authorized to receive it
71.	John Glover	Seaman	17.	8.50	Febr 19	"	ditto	"	Mary Glover
137.	Benjamin Gray	ditto	17.	8.50	"	"	ditto	"	Mary Gray
113.	Edward Homan	ditto	17.	8.50	March 10	"	ditto	"	Alice Homan
112.	George Malzard	ditto	17.	8.50	"	"	ditto	"	Sarah Malzard
46.	John Robinson	ditto	17.	8.50	12	"	ditto	"	Hannah Robinson
9.	Joseph Martin	Boatswain	20.	10.	Febr 15	"	ditto	"	Elizabeth Martin
dischargd	Samuel Nowell	Carpenter	20.	10.	March 1	"	ditto	"	Mary Nowell
146.	James Smith	Ordy Seaman	14.	7.	2	"	ditto	"	Susanna Smith
31.	John Douglass	Cooper	18.	9.	6	"	ditto	"	Elizabeth Douglass
179.	Benjamin Stone	Ordy Seaman	14.	7.	4	"	ditto	16	Lovey Stone
131.	Asahel Page	ditto	12.	6.	Feby 15	"	ditto	"	Lucy Page
123.	James Mugford	ditto	14.	7.	18	"	ditto	"	Eunice Mugford
dischargd	John Paine	Seaman	17.	8.50	March 13	"	ditto	"	Hannah Paine
116.	Francis Barker	ditto	17.	8.50	16	"	ditto	18	Hannah Barker
130.	George Clarke	Boy	14.	7.	Febr 15	"	ditto	"	Mary Clarke
120.	Thomas Jones	Seaman	17.	8.50	26	"	ditto	"	Samuel Dean
114.	James Sparrow	ditto	17.	8.50	March 12	"	ditto	"	Hannah Boylston
8.	Samuel Masury	Gunner	20.	10.	10	"	ditto	19	Elizabeth Masury
205.	John Masury	Boy	12.	6.	5	"	ditto	"	ditto
30.	Samuel Curwen Ward	Capts Clerk	25.	12.50	11	"	ditto	"	Jonathan Hodges
208.	William Barnes	Boy	12.	6.	12	"	ditto	20	Sarah Barnes
90.	Benjamin Butler	Seaman	17.	8.50	3	"	ditto	"	Alice Butler
159.	James Fowler	Ordy Seaman	15.	7.50	10	"	ditto	"	Priscilla Fowler
63.	Daniel Cotterell	Seaman	17.	8.50	Janr 4	"	ditto	"	Elizabeth Sluman
176.	Daniel Woodman	Ordy Seaman	14.	7.	March 9	"	ditto	"	Lucy Woodman
175.	Charles Simpson	Taylor	16.	8.	Janr 3	"	ditto	21	Sarah Simpson
173.	William Very	Boy	14.	7.	March 7	"	ditto	"	Joseph Very

89.	Joseph Shed junr	Seaman	17.	8.50	3	“	ditto	“	Joseph Shed
39.	Simon F. Williams	Steward	18.	9.	March 11	10	Salem	Decr 31	Mary Williams
15.	Royal Gurley	Midshipman	19.	9.50	11	“	ditto	Janr 2	Levi Cutter
				730					
2.	Richard C. Beale	Lieutenant	40.	20.	March 1	10	Boston	Decr 31	Asahel Bigelow
3.	David Phipps	ditto	40.	20.	Febr 12	“	New-York	“	David Phipps junr
7.	William Mumford	Purser	40.	20.	March 19	“	Philadelphia	“	Sarah Mumford

NB. The following Persons having been discharg'd from the Essex since they received their Powers of Attorney, the Powers are in Consequence, cancell'd, and render'd null & void, and are not to be paid by the Agent.

Edward Preble Capt
William Mumford Purser

		pay			
Sheet No. 1	George Stevens, Quarter Master	17	allotment	5.50	
3	Samuel Nowell Carpenter	20	“	10.	
“	John Paine Seaman	17	“	8.50	
	John Jackson, ditto	17	“	8.50	his Power cancell'd at his own Request & not to be paid to his Attorney
				$35.50	

Edward Preble Capt
William Mumford Purser

92 Persons on Allotments Amount	$730—
4 discharged & power cancell'd	35.50
88 persons to be paid Monthly in Salem	$694.50

◆

Hull Dimensions

The hull dimensions given below derive from two sources: The *Essex* Papers and the Papers of Josiah Fox, both in the Peabody Museum of Salem.

In making use of the following dimensions it should be borne in mind that the material from The *Essex* Papers dates from the time of her construction in 1799, while that from the Fox Papers, published here for the first time, represents measurements taken in subsequent years in anticipation of continuing refits. Changes took place over the years. The frigate that was captured off Valparaiso in 1814 was not in every respect the same frigate that was launched from Winter Island, Salem, in 1799.

Data from The Essex *Papers*

Salem Dec^{r} 12. 1799

this certifies whom it may concern that the Essex Frigate built in Salem by Subscription for the United States is of the following dimensions vizt

payable length of the Keel	118 feet
breadth of Beam	37 ft
depth of Hold	12 ft 3 In
heigth between Decks	5 ft 9 I
ditto under the Q[uarte]r Deck forward	6 ft 3 I
ditto d^{o} afterpart	6 ft 6 I
ditto ForeCastle	6 ft 2 I
length of Quarter Deck	70 feet
length of Fore Castle	34 feet

[signed] William Hackett Superintendent
[signed] Enos Briggs Constructor

* * * *

	Feet	*Inches*
Length of the Gun Deck	141	–
Length of the Keel	118	–
Breadth of Beam	37	–
Depth of Hold	12	3
Height between Gun Deck & Lower Deck	5	9
Height of the Waist	6	–
Height under the Quarterdeck	6	3
Dead rising	–	27

Tonnage 850 $\frac{21}{95}$

* * * *

[The following is a direct quote from a note by William Hackett]

For the Frigate bulding in Salem

	feet
the Lenth of the Taferail	22
breadth	3
arching	1–6
thickness	–
2 bottom Peces in Lenth	9
breadth	2
thickness, including the hollow	1–6
2 quorter Peces, in Lenth	4
in breadth	3
2 Corner bracketts, in Lenth	5
2 hollow tops in Lenth	9–6
Supporters under the Cattheads	

the whole will amounto 6 tons timber
at Lest, if it is of a Suteble Sise

* * * *

Dimensions of the Sail Room

	Feet	*Inches*
Length	14	–
Breadth in middle	13	–
Height, midships side	5	–
Height at wing	6	–

* * * *

Dimensions of the Magazine

	Feet	*Inches*
Length on the floor	9	2
Height from plank to plank	5	9
Breadth on the floor at the fore part	6	5
Breadth on the floor at the after part	5	–
Breadth overhead at the fore part	16	–
Breadth overhead at the after part	9	–

* * * *

Dimensions of the Bread Room

Length	12	6
Breadth in middle	4	6
Height in middle	4	9

Height side, or wing	6	–
After end	5	–
Fore end	8	6

Starboard bread room 3 feet wider

* * * *

Data from the Josiah Fox Papers

[The dimensions below, from Fox–732, should be considered rough take-offs for stock only and are not necessarily the actual measurements of the ship.]

[1807] [Fox–732]

Estimate of Cost to Repair the Frigate Essex

14 Strakes of Wales makeing together 2156 feet of 6 inch stuff at 8 Ct pr foot	388.8
~~Strakes of Black Strakes makeing together feet of inch do a pr foot~~	
18 Strakes above do do 2826 feet of 3 inch stuff at 9 Cts pr foot	254.34
~~Berthing between ports feet of inch stuff a pr foot~~	
Quarter galleries 100 Cubic feet at 25 Cts pr foot	25.
Head rails and Timbers 200 Cubic feet at 25 Cts pr foot	50.
4 Cheeks for Head sided 7 inches at $5 each	35.
Knee of the head laceing & insquare Knee 400 Cubic Feet at 50 Cents per foot	200.
2 Main Channels 26 feet long each 27 inches wide 5 inches thick makeing together 117 feet at 21 Cets pr foot	24.57
2 Fore Channels same dimensions and price	24.57
2 Mizen Channels 16.6 feet long each 27 inches wide 5 inches thick makeing together 71 feet at 21 Cts pr foot	14.91
2 Strig Strakes say 352 feet of 4 inch stuff at 12 cts pr foot	42.24
4 Paint Strakes 640 feet of 4 inch Stuff a 12 C pr foot	76.80
Plank for bottom 304 feet of 5½ inch a 16½ C pr foot	41.4
ditto ditto 304 of 5 inch a 15 C pr foot	45.60
ditto ditto 304 of 4½ inch a 13½ C pr foot	41.4
ditto ditto 304 of 4 inch a 12 C pr foot	36.48
Steps of Side 12 cubic feet at 25 Cents pr foot	3.
240 feet of 3½ plank for Counter a 10½ Cts pr foot	25.20
60 feet of 3½ plank for Arch board a 10½ Cts pr foot	9.
200 feet of 3 inch plank for upper part of Stern a 9 Cts pr foot	18.
6000 Trennail of 18 inch a $18 pr thousand	108.
6000 do of 24 inch a $24 pr thousand	144.

Upper Deck

2 Quarter deck rails 74 feet long each 11 by 4½ Inches say 148 feet a 18 C pr foot	26.64
2 Fore Castle do 48 feet long each 11 by 4½ inches say 96 feet a 18 C pr foot	17.28
Birthing of quarters inside & out 1040 feet of 2 inch plank a 6 C pr foot	62.40
For plank Sheers say 347 feet of 3½ inch plank a 10½ C pr foot	36.43
Water ways 320 runing feet 11 by 8 inches sqr a 30 C pr foot	96.
2 Cat Heads 14 feet long 14 inches square each 38 cubic feet a 30 Cts pr foot	11.43
Comings for long hatchways 47 feet long 12 by 8 inches two in Numbers say 628 Cubic feet a 50 Cts pr foot	31.37
2 Headledges for same 15 feet long 10 by 6 inches a 25 C pr foot	7.50
~~Stern waterway running feet by inches a Cents pr foot~~	
Sperketing 320 feet of 3 inch plank a 9 C pr foot	28.80
~~Upper Stem lineing feet inch plank a pr foot~~	
Taffarel Rail 23 feet long of 4 inch stuff a 12 C pr foot	2.76
Two 4 inch knees for same a $1.52 each	3. 4
Two Bumpkins 18 feet long 10 inches square each a 25 Cents per Cub foot	6.25
Bowsprit Bitts 2 in number 8 feet long 12 inches square each at 25 Cents per Cubic foot	4.
Main Topsail sheet bitts 2 in number 14 feet long 10 inches Square each a 25 Cents pr Cubic foot	4.87
Mizen Topsail sheet bitts 2 in Number 5 feet long 7 inches square each a 25 Cents pr Cubic foot	1.87
30 Runing feet of comings & headledges 10 by 4½ inches a 12½ Cents pr foot	3.75
6 String Strakes on deck 942 feet of 4 inch plank a 12 C pr foot	113. 4
4710 Feet of 3 inch plank for deck a 19 Cts pr foot	423.90
22 Beams from 30 to 24 feet long 8 Sided 7½ inches moulded inches a 52½ Cents pr Cubic foot	115.50
18 half Beams 9 feet long 8 sided 7½ inches moulded inches a 52½ Cents pr Cubic foot	35.44
Clamps 640 feet of 4 inch plank a 12 Cts pr foot	76.80
44 hanging knees sided 6 inches, Body 6 feet, Arm 5 feet a $2.25 pr knee	99.
44 lodging do Same Size and price as above	99.
72 knees for long hatchways sided 5 inches a $2 each	144.
348 runing feet of Carlings 7 by 5 inches a 9 Cents pr foot	31.32
1218 runing feet of ledges 5 by 4½ inches a 7 Cents pr foot	85.26
100 feet of 4 inch plank for Capstan partners a 12 Cts pr foot	12.
~~feet of inch plank for birthing between the ports a pr foot~~	
Fore Topsail sheet Bitts 2 Cng 5 feet 8½ inches square a 25 Cts pr foot	1.25
340 feet of 6½ inch stuff for Stantions a Cents pr foot	
Rudder Stock 20 feet long 18 inches Square a 30 Cts pr Cubic foot	

Gun Deck

624 Feet of 4 inch plank for Sperketing a 12 Cts pr foot	74.88
312 Runing feet of waterways 12 inches square a 40 Cts pr foot	124.80
10 String Strakes on Deck 1460 feet of 5½ inch plank a 16½ cts pr foot	240.90
4905 Feet of 3½ inch plank for deck a 10½ Cts pr foot	515. 2
60 Runing feet of Comings & headledges for hatchways 18 by 6 inches at 20 Cts pr foot	12.
4 Cable bitts 12 feet long 17 inches square each a 30 Cents pr Cubic foot	28.90
4 Cable bitt knees 10 feet body, Arms 4 feet sided 11 inches a $6 pr knee	24.
2 Crosspieces for same 12 feet long 14 by 20 inches each a 30 pr Cubic foot	14. 2
24 Beams from 36 to 23 feet long sided 13½ inches Moulded 13 a 52½ pr Cu foot	496.74
48 Hanging knees sided 9 inches Body 7 feet, Arm 5 feet a $3.25 pr knee	156.
48 Lodging knees same Size and price $3.25 each	156.
4 Transom knees Sided 10 inches 9 feet Body 6 feet Arm a $5 each	20.
1900 Runing feet of ledges 5½ by 5 inches a 7 Cents pr foot	133.
450 Runing feet of carlings 8 by 6 inches a 13 Cents pr foot	58.50
100 Runing feet of Mast partners and hatch Carlings 12 by 8 inches at 25 Cents pr Runing foot	25.
Clamps 616 feet of 5 inch plank a 15 Cts pr foot	92.40
12 Knees for Mast partners 6 sided inches a $2.25 Each	27.
~~Knees for Main Hatchways sided inches a Each~~	
4 Spur Beams 15 feet long 11 inches 8 Square a 25 Cents pr foot	15.
8 Knees for same Sided 9 inches a $5 each	40.
162 feet of 6 inch stuff square a 9 Cts pr foot	14.58
1000 feet of 3 inch plank for Shot lockers a 12 Cts pr foot	120.
60 Cubic feet of live oak for steps of Masts a $1 pr foot	60.
5 Breasthooks sided 11 Inches—Arms 8 feet long each a $1 pr foot—140½ Cts ft	140.50
6 Riders 18 feet long 10 inches square a $1 pr Cubic foot	75.
1000 feet of 2 inch plank for hammock battens a 6 Cents pr foot	60.
50 fourth futtocks 12 feet long 10 by 9 inches a 100 Cents pr foot Cubic	375.
138 Top timbers 12 feet long 10 by 9 inches a 100 Cents pr Cubic foot	1035.
140 half do 6 feet long 10 by 9 inches a 100 Cents pr Cbc foot	525.
8 Counter timbers 18 feet long 12 by 10 inches a 100 Cts pr Cbc foot	120.
8 half do 9 feet long 12 by 10 inches a 100 Cts pr Cbc foot	60.

Birth Deck

~~Stern knee Sided 12 inches Body 12 feet 7 Arm feet a~~	
~~Do Sided 12 inches Body 12 feet Arm 7 feet a~~	
Ceiling between Birth and Gun deck 288 feet of 5 inch plank a 15 Cts	43.20
in Waterways 280 runing feet 9 by 12 inches square a 30 Cents pr foot	
10 String Strakes on deck 1350 feet of 4 inch plank a 12 Cts pr foot	
Deck 3915 feet of 3 inch plank a 9 Cts pr foot	352.35

in Carlings and headledges feet runing of inch stuff a pr foot
in 23 Beams from 35 to 10 feet long 13 inches sided Moulded 12 inches a 52½ Cts pr Cubic foot
in 36 Hanging knees Sided 8 inches 6½ feet long 5 feet Arm a $3.25 pr knee
in 82 Lodging knees sided 8 inches 5 body 5 feet Arm a $3.25 pr do
in 1600 Runing feet of Ledges 5 by 5 inches a 17 Cents pr foot
in 420 Runing feet of Carlings 6 by 7 inches a 12½ Cents pr foot
in 4 Spur Beams 15 feet long 11 x 8 inches square each a 25 Cents pr foot
in 8 Knees for same sided 8 inches at $3.25 each
in Clamps 840 feet of 5 inch stuff a 15 Cets pr foot
in Runing feet of Mast Partners and Hatch Carlings 8 by 10 inches a 24 Cts pr foot
~~Knees for Main Hatchway sided inches a Each~~

Hold

5 Forward Orlop deck Beams from 29 to 11 feet long 10 by 8 inches Square a 25 Cents pr foot Cubic	25.
270 Runing feet of ledges 5 by 4 inches a 6¼ Cts pr foot	16.88
48 Runing feet of Carlings 6 by 5 inches a 9 Cts pr foot	4.32
653 Feet of 2 inch plank for decks a 6 Cts pr foot	39.18
11 After Orlop deck Beams from 29 to 11 feet long 10 by 8 inches square a 25 Cents pr foot	55.
540 Runing feet of ledges 5 by 4 inches a 6¼ pr foot	33.75
96 Runing feet of Carlings 6 by 5 inches a 9 Cts pr foot	8.64
1307 Feet of 2 inch plank for decks a 6 Cts pr foot	78.42
in 5600 Feet of 4½ inch plank for ceiling a 13½ Cts pr foot	
in 1300 Feet of 6 inch plank for Bilge and Bendingstrakes at 18 Ct pr foot	
Total Amt	$8682.75

* * * *

[1808] [Fox–773]

[In the original, this document is a tabular listing of the dimensions given below not only for the *Essex* but also for the United States Navy vessels *United States*, *Constitution*, *President*, *Chesapeake*, *Congress*, *Constellation*, *New York*, *Adams*, *John Adams*, *Boston*, *Hornet*, *Wasp*, *Argus*, *Syren*, *Vixen*, *Nautilus*, *Enterprise*, and *Ferret*. Only those pertaining to the *Essex* are reproduced here.]

Length on Gun Deck from forepart of rabbet of stem to afterpart of Wing Transom	141.5
Breadth Extreme including both Wales	37.8
Depth of Hold from limber Strake	18.11½
Height betwixt birth and Gun decks	6.2
" " Gun and Spar decks	5.10

Draft of Water (when dimensions were taken) For[war]d			11.6
do “ “ aft			14.5
Breadth at Wing Transom including Wales			26.3 [?]
Number of Ports (exclusive of Bridleport)		26	
Height of Lower port Sills from Deck			1.9
Ports fore and aft in the Clear			2.10
“ up and down do			2.6
Number of Ports on Quarter deck		10	
do Fore Castle		4	
main deck			
Forepart of Foremost port from Forward			13.
Afterpart of Aftermost port from do			133.1
Gundeck ports from Foreside to foreside			9.7½
Number of Gun deck Beams		25	
do Sided			1.2
do Moulded			1.0
Number of Birth deck Beams		24	
Sided			1.1
Moulded			.10
Centers of	Fore Mast from Forward		21.6
	Main Mast do		83.4
	Mizen Mast do		120.6
Bowsprit Bitts	from Forward		12.
	Asunder		1.8
	Square		1.
Foremost Cable Bitts	from Forward		14.4
	Asunder		4.
	Square		1.6
After Cable Bitts	from Forward		31.11
	Asunder		7.1½
	Square		1.6
Fore Hatchway	Length		8.9½
	Thwartships		7.2
Main Hatchway	Length		9.5
	Thwartships		7.6
After Hatchway	Length		5.5
	Thwartships		6.11
Companion Hatchway	Length		5.8
	Thwartships		6.2

* * * *

[1809] [Fox–950]

Dimentions of Frigate Essex taken February 1809

	Feet	Inches
Length of Gun Deck	141	8
From after part of Gun Deck to 1st Hatch	32	9
Length of Do	4	0
Breadth of Do	6	0¾
After Ledge of Do thick		4½
Coamings Sided		6
Forward Ledge of Do sided		5½
A Sky Light joins the after part of 1st Hatch		
Length of Do	1	6¾
Breadth same as 1st Hatch		
After Ledge of Do sided		5½
Distance from 1st to 2nd Hatch	9	2
Length of Do	5	7
Breadth of Do	6	9½
Coamings of Do sided		5½
Ledges of Do sided		5¾
From 2nd Hatch to 3d Hatch	19	3
Length of Do	9	4
Breadth	7	3¾
Coamings of Do Sided		5½
Ledges of Do Sided		5¾
From 3d to 4th Hatch	20	5¼
Length of Do	8	10¾
Breadth of Do	7	0¾
Coamings of Do sided		5¾
Ledges of Do sided		5¾
From 4th Hatch to fore Scuttle	16	10¾
Length of Scuttles	2	7¾
Breadth	2	3
Coamings of Do sided		4
Ledges of Do sided		4
Breadth of Deck at after part of Deck	23	2¼
½ Do of Deck at after part of 1st Hatch	15	8½
½ Do of Deck at fore part of 2nd Hatch	16	9
½ Do of Deck at after part of 3d Hatch	17	4
½ Do of Deck at after part of 4th Hatch	17	9
½ Do of Deck at after part of Scuttle	15	1
Round of after part of Deck		3½
From after part of Deck to Centre of Mizen Mast hole	22	8
From outside of frame to do of Do	3	0
Frame pieces sided		3½

From 2nd Hatch to Pump Sistern	1	9
Length of Do	4	2
Breadth of Do	3	8¾
From Pump Sistern to Centre of Main Mast hole	2	10
From outside of frame of Do to out side of frame	4	4½
Frame pieces sided		4
From Centre of Main Mast hole to Bits	3	2
Bits Asunder	4	4½
Do square		8¼
From 4th Hatch to After Cable Bits		7¾
do Asunder	6	1
do Square	1	2
Cross-piece, sided	1	1
Do deep	1	5
Knees of Do sided		9
Length of Do	7	9
From 4th Hatch to Centre of Fore Mast hole	11	11
From outside of frame to Do	4	2
Frame pieces, sided		4
From Centre of Mast hole to foremost Cable Bits	3	3½
Do asunder	4	
Do square	1	2
Cross-pieces sided	1	1
Do deep	1	5
Knees sided		9
Length of Do	8	3
From Scuttle to Bowsprit Bits		6¾
do Asunder	1	6
Do Square		10¾
From Scuttle to mainger	8	7
From Scuttle to Stem linning	12	9
Number of Ports on Gun Deck exclusive of Bridled Port 26		
From after part of Deck to 1st Port	10	1
Ports fore & aft in the clear	2	10
Distance apart	7	
Do up & down	2	6
From last Port to Bridled	8	10
From Aft Part of Spar Deck to Aft Port	2	
From do to next	6	11
to 3d	8	10
to 4th	8	7½
to 5th	6	11
to 6th	6	2½
to 7th	5	10¾
Cat Head Square	1	1

From opening for Bowsprit to fore Port on S Deck	3	2¾
Width of Do	2	6
From Aft Side of do to Cat Head	5	2
From Cat Head to next Port	5	2
Width of Do	2	8
To next	8	9
Width of do	2	4
Length of Spar Deck	147	6
From after part of Deck to after part of frame round Mizen Mast	24	7
Length of Do	3	10¼
Breadth of Do	3	0½
End pieces of Do Sided		4
Side pieces of Do Sided		5
From frame round Mizenmast to 1st Hatch	2	6½
Length of 1st Hatch	10	8
Breadth of Do	5	4
Coamings sided		5
Ledges do		4¾
From frame round Mizen Mast to Scuttle	30	1½
Length of Scuttle	3	11
Breadth of Do	1	8½
A Scuttle on each side, asunder		4
From Scuttle to 2nd Hatch which Mast goes through		5½
Length of 2nd Hatch	4	6
Breadth of Do	4	2½
Coamings sided		4
Ledge of do sided		4
From 2nd Hatch to 3d	1	11¾
Length of 3d Hatch	6	1
Do joins Main Hatch		
Breadth of Do	5	6
Coamings sided		4¾
Ledges sided		4¾
Length of Main Hatch	38	11½
Breadth of Do	11	9¼
Coamings Sided		5½
Ledges sided		4¼
From Main Hatch to next	5	2¾
Length of Do	3	4¾
Breadth of Do	3	6
Coamings sided		4
Ledges sided		4
From Do to next Hatch which Mast goes through	1	1½
Length of Do	3	11¾

Breadth	3	11¾
Coamings sided		4
Ledges sided		3¾
From Do to Scuttle	3	2
Length of Scuttle	2	8
Breadth of Do	2	8
From scuttle to Bowsprit hole	5	8½
From after part of Bowsprit hole to Knight head	7	8
Breadth of Bowsprit hole	2	6½
Bits on forward end piece of frame round Mizen Mast fore & aft		7
Do Athwartships		6½
A Bit at forward edge of scuttle aft of Main Mast square		8
one on each side distant from Middle one	3	9½
Do square		8
Two Bits from fore ledge of 2nd hatch		8¼
Do asunder	4	4½
Do square		8¾
Bits joining the forward Ledge of Hatch next Main hatch square		8
Bits from fore Ledge of frame round fore Mast hole	1	2½
Do asunder	2	9¾
Do square		8½
Round of after part of Deck		3
Breadth at after part of Deck	21	7½
½ Do at after part of 1st Hatch	13	2½
½ Breadth at aft part of Scuttle aft of Main Mast	14	8½
½ Do at after part of Main Hatch	15	4
½ Do at forward part of Do	15	9¾
½ Do at after part of scuttle	15	2½
Spar Deck Beams Moulded		8½
Do Sided		10½
Fore & aft pieces sided		6
Do Deep		5¼
Carlings sided		4¾
Do Moulded		4
Knees sided		6
Do along Main Hatch		4½
5 Strakes of Wales each wide		9
Length of fore Channel	21	
Breadth of do	2	
edge next side thick		5
Out edge thick		4¼
Diameter of Deadeyes	1	2
Back Stay do in diameter		9½
Length of Main Channel	21	7

Breadth of do	1	10
Edge next side thick		5
Out edge thick		4¼
Deadeyes in diameter	1	2
Back Stay do in diameter		9½
Length of Mizen Channel	12	
Breadth of do	1	10
Edge next side thick		5
Out edge thick		4¼
Diameter of Deadeyes		9½
Length of Head	14	10
Cheeks asunder	2	2
Ports above Gun Deck	1	9½
~~Rail of Bull Warks thick~~		~~6~~
Ports on Quarter Deck wide	2	10

* * * *

[no date] [Fox–941]

Dimensions of Essex continued

Fore Channels

	feet	*in*	*inches diamr*
center of Foremast deadeye from forepart of Channel		10½	13 by 7
do of 2nd from Center of fore one	3	4¼	do
do of 3rd Backstay deadeye do	1	1	9½ by 5½
do of 4th deadeye do	1	6¼	13 by 7
do of 5 do do	1	6½	do
do of 6 do do	2	8½	do
do of 7 do do	4	3	do
do of 8 do do	2	10	do
do of 9 Backstay deadeyes do	1	8	9½ by 5½
do of 10 Deadeye Backstay do	1	5	9½ by 5½
to after part of Channel do	1	5	
1 Backstay plate from fore part of Channel	10		
2 do abaft 1st	6	11	

two large Deadeyes, afore 2nd port
between 2nd & 3rd ports 3 large & 1 Small deadeye 1 plate
between 3rd & 4th ports 2 large 2 small abd 1 Backstay plate
3 Eye bolts in the Fore-end; 2 eyebolts in the Middle and 3 eyebolts in the after ends. The Crown of the Spare Anchor when Stowed in Chains a foot abaft the after part of Channel

Main Channels	Center of 1 Deadeye abaft forepart of Channel			11	13 by 6½
	do of 2 do	from Center of fore	1	3	do
	do of 3 do	do	1	5	do
	do of 4 do	do	2	1	do
	do of 5 do	do	3	8½	do
	do of 6 do	do	2	2	do
	do of 7 do	do	3	2	do
	do of 8 do	do	4	0½	do
	do of 9 do Backstay do		1	6	9½ by 5
	do of 10 do Backstay do		1	2	do
	from do to after part of Channell		4	0	
	center of 1 Backstay plate from fore end of Channell		10	8	
	do 2 do	do	14	8½	
	No of large Deadeyes between 8 and 9 Ports 4				
	3 deadeyes and 2 Backstay Plates between 9 and 10th Ports				
	1 large & two Backstays				
Mizen Channels	Center of fore deadeye from fore end of Channel			9	10 by 5¼
	2nd do	from center of fore	3	6	do
	3rd do	do	2		do
	4 do	do	3	8½	do
	5 do	do	3	9½	do
	6 do Backstay	do	1	4	
	after end of Channel is 10 inches abaft deadeye center of Mizen				
	backstay Plate 8.4 from the fore end of Channel				

Upper Deck 140 feet long

Number of Strakes in the quarter deck 36 Pine and 4 Oak between Hatches and sides
8 Strakes in wake of Hatchway
Breadth of each Strake at the fore part of Qr Deck 7½ inches at Sky light 6 inches, at afterend 4½ inches. Plank thick 3 inches

Long Hatches—12 Strakes between the waterway and Hatchway
Waterway 11 by 6 inches { 40 Strakes at Break of qr deck 8½ wide
afterend 6 inches
Plank 8½ inches wide—break of quarterdeck
rises above the deck in wake of Hatchway 4 inches;
Fore Castle from the comings of Fore Mast to the side 15 Strakes breadth 9½ inches waterway 11 by 7 inches
Quarter deck—3 inches thick waterway 8 by 11 inches
Companion—from deck 8 inches, Sided 5 inches

Skylights—Comings from deck 7½ inches, sided 5 inches
After Hatch—comings from deck 6½, sided 4½ inches
Main Mast Comings from deck 5½ sided 4¼ inches
Long Hatch—Comings from deck 6½ sided 5¾ at Top and 6½ inches at Bottom
Cistern round the funnel of Galley deep 9 inches, sided 3½ inches
Foremast Comings from deck 5½ sided 4¼ inches
Catheads the Center, abaft forepart of Knight Heads 9 feet length of do 14 feet 6 inches, Sided 14½ moulded 13½

Half Breadth taken aft Side of Beams

	ft		
1st Beam forward	10	10½	Half Breadth Apron—9½ inches
2 Do	14	3½	
3 Do	16	2¼	
4 Do	17		
5 Do	17	5¾	
6 Do	17	8	
7 Do	17	9⅝	
8 Do	17	9¼	
9 Do	17	8¾	
10 Do	17	8	
11	17	7½	
12	17	6	
13	17	4¾	
14	17	2½	
15	16	11¼	
16	16	8¾	
17	16	6½	
18	16	2	
19	15	9	
20	15	4	
21	14	9	
22	14	2	
23	13	4½	
24	12	5¼	
25	11	4¼	

Hatchways half Breadth

	ft	
Fore hatch	3	0½
Main do	3	2
1st After do	2	11
2d do do	2	6½

Plan of Gun Deck of Ship Essex

From inside of Apron to Aft Side of Foremost Beam

	ft	in		
from aft side of	7	11	do	
to aft Side 2d	5	00		
3	5	1½	Centre of Foremast 2–1½ aft of this Beam	
4	4	11		
5	4	7½		
6	5	1¼	Fore Hatch 7.11½ in the Clear	fore & aft
7	9	2⅜		
8	4	11½		
9	4	11¼		
10	5	1½		
11	5	3¼	Main Hatch 8.5 in Clear	
12	9	7¼		
13	6	4	Centre Main Mast 3.6 aft this Beam	
14	6	6¼	pumps Abaft this Beam	
15	6	3½	1st After Hatch 4.7½ in Clear this Beam	
16	5	10⅛		
17	4	9⅝	Centre of Capstern 1.8 forward of aft side	
18	4	1¼	2nd After Hatch 4.8 in Clear	
19	5	10		
20	5			
21	5	3¼	Centre of Mizen Mast 2.6½ forward of aft side of this Beam	
22	4	10		
23	4	9		
24	4	11		
25	4	10		

Bowsprit Bitts fore side of 2d Beam
Fore Scuttle aft Side 2d Do
1st Cable Bitts fore Side of 3d Do
Distance Between do 4 ft
2nd Cable Bitts fore Side of 6th Do
Distance Between 6 ft

On Gun Deck

	[ft]	[in]
Hawse Holes—above deck	1	3
Diameter of do in the Clear	1	1½

Hanging Knees—Body long about 4.6 Arms 5 feet
Sided 6½ inches
Lodging Knees—Body long from 2.8 to 4.8 Arms 3.4 to 4.8
Sided 6 inches

Rudder Head diameter	1	5½
Height of lower Cill of Cabin windows above range of Gun Deck	3	2½
Sky light Height of Coming above deck (midship)	2	2½
at the Sides	1	7
Sided		4½
After Hatch coming from deck	1	3
Sided		5½
Pump Cistern coming from deck	1	2
Sided		3½
Main Topsail Sheet bitts length	10	9½
Square 10 inches, asunder	4	7
Main Mast comings from deck		7¼
Sided		4½
Main Hatchway comings from deck	1	1
Sided		7¼
Fore Hatchway—comings from deck	1	1½
Sided		5½
Cable bitts, After ones, length	13	
Bellfrey bitts—length	10	6
Square		10
Fore Topsail Sheet bitts length	10	6
Square		9
Bowsprit Bitts length	8	6
Square	1	
Asunder	1	8
Manger above deck	1	4
Bowsprit above breasthooks		9
Mizen Mast diamr in the partners		19 inches
Main Mast do		28¾
Fore Mast do		26¼
Bowsprit Bed		26

Hanging Knees of Gun deck—Sided 8½ length of Body 6 feet Arms 5.6
Lodging Knees of do Sided 8½ Body 4 feet arms 5.
Carlings of do 4.8 9½ by 6 inches
Ledges do 18. 5½ by 4¾ inches
Comings of After hatch on birth deck—above deck 7½ sided 6 inches
Main hatch do 4½ 6 inches
Fore do 4 5½

Fore Sheet Chocks Centers are 16 inches afore 7th Port and 3 feet above Gun deck
Main Tack comes through above the 4th Port, 9 inches below upper deck
Main Sheet Chock is between 2nd and third Port from Aft and 3.7 above Gun-deck

Gun Deck 145 feet long } No. of Strakes between Waterway and Main Hatch
6 oak Strakes next waterway, then 9 Strakes of Pine and 2 Oak Strakes next Hatchway in all 17 Strakes each side of main Hatch Width—9½ inches: Thick 3½ and 4½ inches on do

Waterway—10 inches Square of Oak
Spirketting—2 Strakes 3¾ thick 8¾ broad each
Clamps—2 Strakes 4 in. thick 9 inches broad each
Filling—4 Strakes 3 inch do—11¾ wide
Filling room floor 10.4 long
  Breadth at Forepart 7.4 do at after part 11½ inches
  ~~Light room abaft~~
  Height from filling room Floor to under part of Beams is 5.4
Light room—Floor long 4.6—Breadth at forepart 5.4 aft 6 inches
  Height 3 feet—Situated abaft Filling room
Magazine length of Floor—10.4½ Breadth at forepart 6.7 inches
  Breadth at after end—3.2
  Height—4.10
Beams of Spar deck

Sided 9 Inches Moulded 7½ inches

1st	23.4
2	27.6½
3	29.3
4	29.8½
5	30.1
6	30.3
7–½	8.2
8	30.4
9–½	9.6
10	30.3
11–½	8.2
12	30.2
13–½	8.2
14	29.10½
15	29.2½
16	28.9
17	28.4½
18	28.
19	27.6
20	27.1½
21	26.7
22	26.3½
23	26.2
24	25.4½
25	25.
26	24.3½
27	23.6¾
28	22.9½
29	21.11¾
30	21.1½

~~Number of~~ Strakes on Gun deck wide at Main Hatchway 8¾
at Fore Hatchway 9⅓ inches
at Sky light 8⅛ do
Bumkins—length—15 feet 8½ inches Square
Head rails—length 19 feet. Sided at after end 5 inches at Fore do 4
Moulded do 9 do 3
Middle rail—length 15.6—sided 3½ moulded 5½
Cheeks—length of Body on the Bows—8.4 }
do on Knee 6.6 } Sided 6 inches
Scuppers—10 of each side
Birth Deck
136 feet long—width 34 feet—40 Strakes 10 inches wide and 3 inches thick

* * * *

[Note: *Hull Dimensions* continued overleaf.]

[no date] [Fox–949]

Essex	Lengths of decks on Seams	Number of Seams	Thickness of plank	Total number of runing feet	No. of lbs of Oakum to a foot	Total Quantity of Oakum
	Feet	No.	Inches	Feet	lbs.	lbs.
Spar Deck	149	46	3	6854	¾	5140
Gun Deck	141	46	4	6486	1	6486
Birth Deck	134	48	3	6432	¾	4894
Forward Platform	30	35	2	1050	½	525
After Platform	34	34	2	1196	½	598
Topsides	156	12	4	1872	1	1872
Wales	156	12	7	1872	2	3744
Paint Work	156	8	5	1248	1⅓	1664
Sperqueting	156	6	4	936	1	936
Sperqueting between Gun and Spar Decks	156	16	4	2496	1	2496
Counter	20	7	4	140	1	140
Black Strakes	156	6	5	936	1⅓	1248
Below Wales	160	18	5	2880	1⅓	3840
$ Cts						33,585
Total 1178–93						
Thickness of plank	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total No. of feet	2246	13286	11930	5064	–	1872
Days work	150	65	48	40	35	25
Total Amt. of each class	30,84	421,06	512,	260,79	–	154,24

[Quantity of pitch, rosin, tar, copper, etc. and wages omitted]

Indents

[The items listed in the lefthand column are taken from the Indents in The *Essex* Papers. They have been matched here with the suppliers' bills and receipts from the same source. Other indents, including articles procured after the *Essex* left Salem, are with the Edward Preble Papers in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.]

ARMORER'S (Joseph Newhall) INDENT

Item from indent	*Supplied by (from bills)*
1 armorer's forge	Sears & Perkins (Boston)
1 iron furnace	" " "
1 iron pan wrought in a frame	" " "
1 pair bellows	" " "
1 armorer's wooden chest	" " "
1 anvil & beck	" " "
1 pair standing vices	" " "
1 bench stake	" " "
1 b[r]eak iron	" " "
1 upright drill	" " "
1 bench vice	" " "
2 hand vices	" " "
1 pair stock shears	" " "
1 screw plate	" " "
1 pair cutting nippers	" " "
4 pair pincers	" " "
2 pair plyers	" " "
1 ladle	" " "
1 brace & bits	" " "
1 drill bow with drills & breast plate	" " "
2 knots gut	" " "
2 lbs. brass solder	" " "
1 sledge hammer	" " "
1 [or 4] hammers sorted	" " "
2 cold chisels	" " "
4 punchers [punches]	" " "
1 bolster	" " "
3 pair tongs	" " "
1 soldering iron	" " "
1 bright wrench	" " "
6 hammer handles sorted	" " "
18 file hands [handles]	" " "
3 lbs. emery	" " "
2 lbs. borax	" " "
2 lbs. sal almoniac	" " "
3 lbs. soft solder	" " "

2 lbs. rotten stone	“ “ “
3 quires emery paper	“ “ “
38 assorted files	“ “ “
1 iron ring shovel	“ “ “
180 pair handcuffs	Seth Brooks
50 pair leg irons with bolts & locks	“ “
15 lbs. wire	“ “
2 spike tools	“ “
2 deck nail tools	“ “
1 drawing nail tool	“ “
1 board nail tool	“ “
1 boat nail tool	“ “
10½ lbs. steel	“ “
2 sets of hammers	“ “
1 handle for soldering iron	“ “
1 sledge	“ “
513 lbs. bar iron	“ “
700 lbs. nails rods	“ “
400 spare keys for handcuffs	“ “
2 lanterns	Joseph Newhall
1 nail set	Seth Brooks (?)

BOATSWAIN’S (Joseph Martin) INDENT

ANCHORS

Item from indent	*Supplier (from bills)*
4 bower anchors, weighing 15,514 lbs.	Salem Iron Factory Co.
1 stream anchor (1,092 lbs.)	“ “ “ “
1 kedge anchor (515 lbs.)	“ “ “ “
3 boat anchors (198 lbs.)	Seth Brooks
2 iron creepers	“ “
1 anchor (484 lbs.)	Salem Iron Factory Co.

CABLES

Item from indent		*Supplier (from bills)*
5 16-inch cables (32,461 lbs.)		Thomas Briggs, Jonathan Haraden, and Joseph Vincent
1 stream cable	(3,526 lbs.)	Briggs or Haraden or Vincent
1 hawser		Thomas Briggs
1 towline		“ “
1 messenger (1,465 lbs.)		“ “

SAILS

(All made by Buffum & Howard)

2 boom drivers
2 *mizzen* drivers
2 mizzen staysails
2 storm staysails
2 topmast staysails
2 topsail staysails
2 topgallant sails
2 royals
2 *main* courses
2 topsails
2 topgallant sails
2 royals
4 lower steering sails
4 topgallant steering sails
4 topmast steering sails
2 mainstaysails

2 topmast staysails
2 middle staysails
2 topgallant staysails
2 *fore* courses
2 topsails
2 topgallant sails
2 royals
4 lower steering sails
4 topmast sails
4 topgallant sails
2 forestaysails
2 topmast staysails
2 jibs
2 flying jibs
2 spritsail courses
2 spritsail topsails

76

12 bolts Russia duck	Buffum & Howard
12 bolts American duck	“ “ “
4 bolts Ravens white duck	“ “ “
4 bolts brown Ravens duck	“ “ “
2 bolts American remnants	“ “ “
2½ bolts Russia remnants, thick and thin	“ “ “
36½ spare duck	
50 lbs. sewing twine	“ “ “
75 lbs. whipping twine	“ “ “
9 hatch tarpaulins	“ “ “
1 middle screen	“ “ “

BLOCKS

(All blocks by Benjamin Felt)

6	double blocks	6	inches
1	“ “	8	“
1	“ “	9	“
2	“ “	10	“
1	“ “	14	“
2	“ “	17	“
14	deadeyes	13	“
10	“	7½	“
5	“	6	“

12	single blocks	9	inches
66	“ “	10	“
11	“ “	11	“
48	“ “	12	“
1	“ “	8	“
4	“ “	17	“
2	“ “	15	“
5	“ “	16	“
1	“ “	19	“

9 dozen leading trucks
8 splicing fids
26 serving mallets
1 treble block 16 inch single plank
6 double blocks 16 inch doubled scored plank
2 double blocks 16 inch single scored plank
12 double blocks 11 inches
11 " " 9 "
17 " " 8 "
15 single " 8 "
2 single " 12 "
24 handspikes
2 viol blocks 24 "
4 shoulder " 17 "
single plank

24 " " 6 "
24 " " 5 "
24 " " 7 "
4 sister " 19 "
2 " " 14 "
4 " " 11 "
4 Harts 9 "
2 " 10 "
2 " 15 "
6 sheave " 16 "
4 fiddle " 20 "
2 sheave " 4½ "
2 snatch " 12 "
4 " " 15 "
2 " " 18 "

Item from indent		*Supplier (from bills)*
33 coils cordage	(16,025 lbs.)	Briggs or Haraden or Vincent
28 " spunyarn		" " "
" marline 74 doz. & 8 skeins		Thomas Briggs
1 coil white rope, spare (180 lbs.) [for cabin gun breeching]		" "
3 silver calls [boatswain's pipes]		Ebenezer Bowditch
1 silver chain & plate		" "
126 lbs. deep sea lines [4 of 60-fathoms each]		James Brown & William Luscomb (?)
38 cod, log, & other fishing lines		Thomas Briggs
1 cask lampblack (51 papers)		William Luscomb (?)
2 boats' canvas covers		Buffum & Howard
1 smoke sail		" " "
2 sails for long boat		" " "
2 sails for barge		" " "
2 sails for cutter		" " "
2 sails for yawl		" " "
10 bolts Russia duck for the main deck awning		" " "
4 coils bolt rope (390 lbs.)		Briggs or Haraden or Vincent
4 remnant coils bolt rope (120 lbs.)		(?)
1 cabin screen		Buffum & Howard
24 dozen hanks		Israel Smith
1 coil 1½″ cordage	(385 lbs.)	Briggs or Haraden or Vincent
1 coil 2½″ cordage		" " "
1 coil remnant cordage		" " "
3 coil spunyarn & remnants		" " "

39 lbs. marline	“ “ “
17 iron thimbles & hooks	Joseph Eveleth or Alden Briggs or Seth Brooks
2 awnings	Buffum & Howard
2 wind sails	“ “ “
12 yards Ravens duck	Thayer & Chapman (?)
120 hooks & thimbles	Joseph Eveleth or Alden Briggs
4 coils second-hand cordage (707 lbs.)	(?)
10 iron shovels	(?)
24 marlinspikes	Benjamin Felt
6 spare steeringsail boom irons	John Barker
4 boat hooks	Seth Brooks
2 hatchets	“ “
48 palms	James Brown
16 dozen boltrope needles (6 large, 10 small)	“ “
5 barrels tar	(?)
1 bolt thin Russia & 1 bolt thin Russia hammock duck	Buffum & Howard
8 coils worming (1,055 lbs.)	(?)
40 sides leather (596½ lbs.)	William Gray, Jr.
2 pair can hooks	Alden Briggs (?)
2 dozen marlin needles	James Browne
24 scrubbing brushes	(?)
2 lbs. beeswax	(?)
12 wind sail hoops	(?)
21½ dozen iron hanks	Israel Smith (?)
200 fathoms second-hand rope [for serving the cables]	(?)
36 billhooks, different sizes	(?)
junk (889 lbs.)	Poor House
1 pair steelyards	(?)
4 lanterns	Joseph Newhall

CARPENTER'S (Samuel York Nowell) INDENT

Item from indent	*Supplier (from bills)*
4 hand saws	Seth Brooks
1 crosscut saw	“ “
1 whip saw	“ “
2 jointer planes & irons	“ “
3 smoothing planes & irons	“ “
1 rabbet plane	“ “
1½″ bead plane	“ “ (?)
8 chisels	“ “
4 drawing knives [shaves]	“ “

12 augers various sizes [& auger shanks]	“ “
6 large spike gimlet	“ “
6 hammers, different sizes	“ “
3 adzes	“ “
4 carpenter’s [broad] axes	“ “
2 iron squares	“ “
4 iron mauls	“ “
6 caulking mallets	“ “
3 boxwood rulers	“ “ (2)
4 pair compasses	“ “ (2)
30 caulking mallets	“ “
1 round ladle	“ “
1 spout ladle	“ “
2 boat hooks	“ “
1 set hammer	“ “ (2)
6 deck nail gimlets	“ “
6 deck gimlets	“ “
6 board gimlets	“ “
1 compass saw	“ “
1 dozen files	“ “
2 rasps	“ “
4 fore planes & irons	“ “
6 rattail files	“ “
1 hatchet	“ “
6 gouges	“ “
200 staples	“ “
12 axe handles	“ “
4 planes assorted	“ “ (?)
3 saw sets	“ “ (2)
12 sets pump boxes	Benjamin Felt
12 pump brakes	“ “
2 pump hooks	Alden Briggs (?)
12 pump bolts	“ “ (?)
1 cask containing 348 lbs., 310 spikes, 379 deck nails	(?)
683 ft. pine boards & plank	Enos Briggs (?)
91 ft. oak boards	“ “ (?)
50 lbs. tallow	Robert Stone Jr. & Co.
243 lbs. oakum	Salem Poor House
2 pump spears	Alden Briggs (?)
1 engine with copper tub, pipe suction, & leading	Ephraim Thayer (Boston)
66 gallons paint oil	William Luscomb
42 gallons black varnish	“ “
two hundredweight & ¾ whiting for putty	“ “
two hundredweight yellow paint	“ “

one hundredweight white lead	“ “
20 lbs. green paint	“ “
20 [or 28] lbs. vermillion red	“ “
60 lbs. Venetian red	“ “
10 gallons spirits of turpentine	“ “
36 deepsea leads & fishing leads (264 lbs.)	“ “
60 paint brushes	“ “
24 leather buckets	James Bott
2 iron pots	Thayer & Chapman (Boston)
5 claw crowbars	Seth Brooks (?)
2 spokeshaves	“ “
10 rods for bolts (111 lbs.)	Alden Briggs or Paul Revere
2 barrels pitch	Upton & Porter
1 barrel rosin	Upton & Porter
1 conductor chain [lightning rod]	Paul Revere
25 lbs. chalk	Seth Brooks
50 lbs. 20-p nails	James Browne (?)
52 lbs. 10-p nails	“ “ (?)
40 lbs. 6-p nails	“ “ (?)
50 lbs. scupper nails	“ “ (?)
1 brand /ESSEX/	Jonathan Peirce
8 sheets thin copper (92 lbs.)	Peabody & Perkins (?)
complete set spare spars exclusive of lower masts & bowsprit	Laighton (Portsmouth), and Babbidge (Salem)
1 spare lower cap	Hawkes & Babbidge
1 spare topmast cap	“ “ “
spare trestle & crosstrees	“ “ “
1 roll sheet lead	Thayer & Chapman (Boston)
3 kegs varnish	“ “ “
7 narrow Quaker hatchets	“ “ “
2 broad Quaker hatchets	“ “ “
1 side English pump leather	“ “ “
2 chains for chain pump	Jonathan Balch (Boston)
30 lbs. mop yarn	Seth Brooks
2 pump hammers	“ “
6 formers [chisels]	“ “
6 chalklines	“ “
6 cold chisels	“ “
1 starting hammer	“ “
1 set hammer	“ “
6 mop nails	“ “
2 punchers	“ “
1 pair compasses	“ “
1 hatchet	“ “
10 clasps & staples	“ “
2 lanterns	Joseph Newhall

1 box tin	“ “
4 pair large grains	Thayer & Chapman (Boston)
3 harpoons	“ “ “
4,000 copper pump nails	“ “ “
2,000 copper clapper nails	“ “ “

COOPER'S (John Douglass) INDENT

(*Note:* all items supplied by Seth Brooks)

2 adzes
1 cooper's axe
1 bick iron (24 lbs.)
2 bitstocks
1 dozen bitts
2 bung borers
2 tap borers
29 lbs. chalk
2 iron cold chisels
2 pair of compasses
1 stock for croze iron
1 croze iron
2 flagging dogs
2 iron drivers
6 files
3 bundle flags
2 riveting hammers
2 handsaws
200 iron hoops (2 bundles)
1 howel
2 pair marking irons
2 drawing knives
2 lanterns
1 pointer (or jointer)
2 pointer irons
2 punches
2 saw sets
1 hallout shave
1 hollow shave
4 vices
600 rivets

GUNNER'S (Samuel Masury) INDENT

Item from indent	*Supplier (from bills)*
26 12-lb. cannon (68,415 lbs.)	Navy Department
10 6-lb. cannon (14,893 lbs.)	" "
26 12-lb. carriages	James Gould
10 6-lb. carriages	" "
1809 12-lb. shot	Benjamin Seymour/Wright & Briggs
683 6-lb. shot	" " " " "
402 double-headed shot	" " (Plymouth)
543 grape cartridges	" "
507 bottoms & pins	" "
264 cannister shot	" "
1071 12-lb. flannel cartridges	Samuel Masury
800 12-lb. paper cartridges	" "
377 6-lb. flannel cartridges	" "
375 6-lb. paper cartridges	" "
4,000 musket & pistol cartridges	" "
37 wormers	Seth Brooks
36 gun bits	" "
36 priming wires	" "
40 breeching thimbles	" "
48 breeching hooks & thimbles	" "
2 gun scrapers	" "
30 small marlinspikes for guns	" "
5 large marlinspikes	" "
4 loggerheads	" "
2 wood formers	James Gould
10 tompions for 6-pounders	" "
2 sponges & rammers for 6-pounders	" "
1 six-pound ladle	" "
1 powder horn	" "
36 lint stocks	" "
52 tompions for 12-pounders	" "
30 tompions for 6-pounders	" "
72 handspikes	" "
13 ladles for 12-pounders	Dennis & Waters
5 ladles for 6-pounders	" " "
18 spare ladles	" " "
26 wormers for 12-pounders	James Gould
10 wormers for 6-pounders	" "
26 sponges & rammers for 12-pounders	" "
10 sponges & rammers for 6-pounders	" "
13 spare heads for 12-pound rope sponges & rammers	" "

5 spare heads for 6-pound rope sponges & rammers	“ “
36 powder horns	“ “
26 spare [carriage] wheels	“ “
6 port fire staffs	“ “
6 pouch tubs	“ “
104 casks powder (9,880 lbs.) started into 87 casks	Navy Department
1 pair snuffers & nippers	James Browne (?)
6 white lines	Thomas Briggs
42 [or 48] tin lanterns	Joseph Newhall
36 tin side lanterns	“ “
12 tin signal lanterns	“ “
500 lbs. musket & pistol balls	“ “
60 lbs. putty	William Luscomb
28 lbs. white lead	“ “
2 lbs. glue	“ “
1½ gallons spirits of turpentine	“ “
1½ dozen breeching hooks & thimbles	Seth Brooks
6 thimbles	“ “
100 brushes & priming wires	Seth King
26 8-inch double blocks	Benjamin Felt
26 8-inch single blocks	“ “
10 7-inch double blocks	“ “
10 7-inch single blocks	“ “
1 brass bullet mold	Joseph Newhall
28 bars lead (200 lbs.)	(?)
400 cannister bottoms	Benjamin Felt
300 tin 12-pound cannisters	Joseph Newhall
100 6-pound cannisters	“ “
60 muskets & bayonets	Navy Department
30 pair pistols	“ “
100 cutlasses	“ “
100 boarding pikes	“ “
36 12-pound cartridge boxes	James Bott (painted by William Luscomb)
12 6-pound cartridge boxes	“ “ “ “ “ “
60 cartridge boxes & belts for muskets	“ “
30 cartridge boxes & belts for pistols	“ “
63 bayonet scabbards	“ “
2 drums	Jacob P. Rust
72 prongs for scabbards	James Bott
36 crowbars	Seth Brooks (?)
1,000 flints	Joseph Newhall
1 set powder measures	Dennis & Waters
1 copper adze	“ “ “
1 copper vice	“ “ “

1 copper hammer	“ “ “
2 copper funnels	“ “ “
142 lbs. slowmatch	Thomas Briggs and Joseph Vincent
4,000 pump & clapper nails	Joseph Browne (?)
7 reams thick & thin cartridge paper	Thayer & Chapman (Boston)
450 copper nails	Alden Briggs (?)
120,014 lbs. junk for wads	Salem Poor House (?)
1 large magazine lantern	Joseph Newhall
8 lbs. colored thread	Thayer & Chapman
50 screw drivers	“ “ “
678 tubes [& filling]	“ “ “
36 port fires	“ “ “
2 fifes	“ “ “
20 boxes for cannon cartridges	John Archer, Jr.
7 boxes for small arms cartridges	“ “ “
7 arms chests [3 for the tops, 4 large for quarterdeck]	“ “ “
18 boxes for cannister shot	“ “ “
1 hand brush	(?)

[Additional notes]: James Bott also made one leather hose (48 feet neats leather with four tins for joints. See Carpenter's Indent). Robert Porter (see Cooperage section) made 10 match tubs, not included in the indent above.

PURSER'S (William Mumford) INDENT

Item from indent	*Supplier (from bills)*
108 casks & loose bread weighing 45,397 lbs.	Upton & Porter
100½ barrels beef (20,000 lbs.)	Thaddeus Wellington
104 barrels pork (20,334 lbs.)	William Marston
52 iron-bound casks, West Indian rum (3,075 gallons)	Pickering Dodge & Co.
25 casks cheese (4,001 lbs.)	Upton & Porter
20 kegs butter (1,439 lbs.)	Benjamin Hall
8 casks vinegar (469 gallons)	Jonathan Waldo
23 casks beans & peas (134$\frac{15}{16}$ bushels)	Wright & Briggs, William Marston
20 barrels flour (4,200 lbs.)	James Wright & Joseph Waters
14 barrels Indian meal (2,100 lbs.)	Upton & Porter
1 cask lamp oil (77 gallons)	(?)
8 casks salt fish (4,800 lbs.)	J. Waters
14 casks rice (4,499 lbs.)	Josiah Bacon (Boston)
9 boxes candles (477)	Robert Stone, Jr. & Co.
10 boxes soap (420½ lbs.)	Robert Stone, Jr. & Co.
6 casks molasses (340 gallons)	Peabody & Perkins
81 barrels potatoes (202½ bushels)	J. Waters, John Jenks

	161 water casks, iron-bound (27,460 gallons)	
	20 casks of 300 gallons	Robert Porter
	61 casks of 200 gallons	“ “
	39 casks of 150 gallons	“ “
	22 casks of 100 gallons	“ “
	19 casks of 60 gallons	“ “
	70 iron-bound breakers (10 gallons each)	“ “
	2 harness tubs	“ “
	60 mess cans	“ “
	50 kids	“ “
	2 iron bailed draw buckets	“ “ and John Basset
	22 common draw buckets	“ “ “ “ “
	2 horse buckets	“ “
cook's utensils	2 spits with iron wheels & collars	David Sears (Boston)
	1 crank handle for jack	“ “
	1 tormenter	“ “
	1 ladle	“ “
	1 poker	“ “
	1 shovel	“ “
	1 tongs	“ “
	1 rake	“ “
	1 jack with friction wheels and bearers	“ “
	24 monthly returns provisions	William T. Clap (Boston)
	60 weekly returns provisions	“ “ “
	36 blank returns	“ “ “
	1 dozen ink powder	“ “ “
	200 quills	“ “ “
	wax wafers and pounce	“ “ “
	3 blank books	“ “ “
	1 ledger & waste book	“ “ “
	1 receipt & letterbook	“ “ “
	7 blank books	“ “ “
	1 ream foolscap paper	“ “ “
	1 ream letter paper	“ “ “
	ink stands & glasses	“ “ “
	scales & dividers	“ “ “
	1 penknife	“ “ “
	large paper & lead pencils	“ “ “
	1 Marine Laws	“ “ “
	259 hammocks	Buffum & Howard
	4 hammock cloths	“ “ “
	10 cots	“ “ “
	52 canvas bags	Lane & Son

yellow ware	6 dishes	William Hathorne
	4 dozen plates	“ “
	1 quart mug	“ “
	2 pair salts	“ “
	2 bowls	“ “
	1 teapot	“ “
	12 coffee bowls & saucers	“ “
	1 straw tumbler	“ “
	1 pair butter boats	“ “
1 tablecloth		“ “
1 dozen towels		“ “
4 pieces tape		“ “
cabin furniture	12 cot chairs	Jacob Sanderson
	1 set mahogany dining tables	“ “
	1 large plate tray with brass lifting handles	“ “
	1 tray for decanters, bowls, & glasses, with brass lifting handles	“ “
1 painted table for Ward Room 6′4″		“ “
12 painted & varnished dining chairs (8 fan-back, 4 fan-back with arms)		“ “
1 large painted storechest		“ “
6 cot chairs [8 of the chairs supplied by Sanderson were canvas-bottomed]		“ “
6 brass cocks		John Ward
2 copper tea kettles [for Cabin]		Samuel Archer
11 boxes wax candles for signal lights (479 lbs.)		Robert Stone, Jr. & Co. (?)
12 silver teaspoons [for Cabin]		Ebenezer Bowditch
4 copper hand pumps		Thayer & Chapman (Boston)
1 pair steelyards		William & George Dean
tin ware	3 pint pots	Joseph Newhall
	2 measures	(?)
	6 candlesticks	Joseph Newhall
	2 tinderboxes	“ “
	2 lanterns	“ “
	1 hand pump	“ “
	2 pair scales	“ “
	15 lead & iron weights	“ “
	12 measures	“ “
	6 funnels	“ “
	18 sailors pots	“ “
	6 sailors pots	“ “
	4 candle boxes	“ “
	2 sauce pans	“ “

41 iron-bound casks for rum (2,867 gallons)	Robert Porter(?), Joshua Phippen
1 memorandum book	Thomas C. Cushing
1 ink stand	“ “ “
6 quires sailors' power of attorney	“ “ “
18½ cords wood } fuel	Benjamin Babbidge
8 chaldrons coal } fuel	Hayden & Baxter
2 barrels fine salt	(?)
36 padlocks	James Browne, Thayer & Chapman
1 box wafers	Thomas C. Cushing
1 quire paper	“ “ “
1 slate	“ “ “
24 payroll books	“ “ “
24 muster roll books	“ “ “
2 reams paper	“ “ “
300 quills	“ “ “
½ dozen black ink powder	“ “ “
½ dozen red ink powder	“ “ “
6 quires Royal paper	“ “ “
23 journals	“ “ “
2 logbooks (one of 2 quires, bound; one of 1 quire, stitched)	“ “ “
2 blank books	“ “ “
2 quires brown paper	“ “ “
4 quires gilt letter paper	“ “ “
4 blank books	“ “ “
1 East India Pilot & Directory	“ “ “
2 account books ledger & journal	“ “ “
1 North America Pilot in two parts	William P. & L. Blake
1 Pilot for the West Indies, with Directions	“ “ “ “ “
1 tin coffee pot	William & George Dean
1 pewter teapot	“ “ “ “
1 dozen pewter tablespoons	“ “ “ “
1 dozen pewter teaspoons	“ “ “ “
1 iron tea kettle with handle	“ “ “ “
2 Japanned tea kettles	“ “ “ “
1 patent iron tea kettle	“ “ “ “

[The following, unless noted otherwise, were cabin furnishings]

1 drip stone	Thayer & Chapman (Boston)
1 Japanned pitcher (or, server)	“ “ “
2 polished tin tureens	“ “ “
1 brass cabin stove	“ “ “

2 Japanned candle boxes	“ “ “
2 iron ladles	“ “ “
2 tormenters	“ “ “
2 small patent lamps	“ “ “
4 brushes	“ “ “
6 mops	“ “ “
6 scrubbing brushes	“ “ “
6 polished saucepans	“ “ “
2 iron pots	Elijah Lewis
2 frying pans	Thayer & Chapman
1 chaffing dish	“ “ “
1 gridiron	“ “ “
1 large tin pudding pan	“ “ “
2 pair snuffers	“ “ “
4 green tablecloths (2 of 8′ x 4′; 2 of 7′ x 4′)	“ “ “
2 dozen metal tablespoons	“ “ “
1 large iron coffee mill	“ “ “
1 wood coffee mill	“ “ “
2 plate baskets	“ “ “
3 tin funnels	“ “ “
1 polished tin coffee pot	“ “ “
2 cabin bells with 1 lb. fine brass wire and 6 bell cranks	“ “ “ and Samuel Archer
5 pair brass candlesticks	“ “ “
1 cullender	“ “ “
1 cheese toaster	“ “ “
2 pepper boxes	“ “ “
2 flour boxes	“ “ “
1 patent sheet-iron kettle	“ “ “
2 plated soup ladles	“ “ “
1 dozen double padlocks	“ “ “
1 Japanned tea tray	“ “ “
1 waiter	“ “ “
2 bread baskets	“ “ “
2 knife baskets	“ “ “
1 tea caddy	“ “ “
2 pair carvers	“ “ “
2 dozen knives & forks	“ “ “
2 snuffer trays	“ “ “
12 tablecloths	“ “ “
2 of 10′ x 10′	
2 of 10′ x 12′	
2 of 10′ x 16′	
5 of 8′ x 8′	
1 of 8′ x 7′	

1 hair mattress	"	"	"
1 looking glass	"	"	"
1 tea & coffee sets china	"	"	"
2 dozen wine glasses	"	"	"
2 pair decanters	"	"	"
1 cheese tray	"	"	"
2 entry lamps	"	"	"
1 set casters	"	"	"
1 dozen baking dishes, assorted	"	"	"
6 dozen soup & flat plates	"	"	"
2 dozen common tumblers	"	"	"
1 metal chocolate pot	"	"	"
1 dozen dessert plates	"	"	"
6 mugs, Queen's ware	"	"	"
6 pitchers, assorted	"	"	"
2 pair butter boats	"	"	"
2 pair salts & spoons	"	"	"
3 wash hand basins [2 of pewter]	"	"	"
1 stool pan & chamber mug	"	"	"
1 set curtains & rods [see description below]	"	"	"
1 Black Jack [leather mug, not in indent but in separate list of cabin furnishings]		(?)	

[Description of materials for cushions and curtains for the Captain's Cabin. Thayer & Chapman's bill also includes charges for making 15 feet "cushion valons" (valenciennes?) and for making 2 large cabin curtains and 2 small.]

3 pair strings for windows
2 pillows
1 crate & 2 boxes
13 yards green morane
45 yards lace
18 lbs. hair
29 yards chintz furniture
28 yards fringe
32 yards lace
2 laths & pulleys
2 rods
rings & leads
floss & twine
6 tassels
48 yards line
2 pair cloak pins
hooks & tacks
8 yards tow cloth & box

CAPTAIN PREBLE'S PERSONAL STORES

(Incomplete list of goods delivered aboard the *Essex* from the sloop *Lydia*, freighted from Boston.)

1 chest
2 kegs liquor
6 pots pickles
3 barrels flour
2 barrels bread
5 loaves sugar

2 copper tea kettles
2 quadrants
1 box charts
9 small packages
1 drip stone
2 baskets glassware
1 firkin 20 lbs. coffee
1 firkin 4 lbs. pepper
1 cannister tea
1 pot mustard
10 bags corn, 20 bushels
6 half-barrels crackers
half barrel bottled oil
1 cask cheese
1 box cheese
1 barrel meal
20 hams
2 casks butter
2 boxes raisins
1 cask almonds
1 keg liquors
1 cask sherry wine
1 cask Port wine

SAILING MASTER'S (Rufus Low) INDENT

Item from indent	*Supplier (from bills)*
1131 pieces kentledge (313 tons)	Navy Department
pig iron (25 tons)	“ “
shingle ballast (60 tons)	John Williams and Micah Wild
2 sets American colors containing Jack, ensign, and pendent	James Browne
9 spare American ensigns	“ “
2 spare American pendents	“ “
1 spare American flag	“ “
1 piece yellow bunting	“ “
1 set English colors containing Jack, ensign, and pendent	“ “
1 set French colors containing Jack, ensign, and pendent	“ “
1 set Dutch colors containing Jack, ensign, and pendent	“ “
1 Swedish ensign	“ “
1 Danish ensign and Jack	“ “
1 Spanish ensign	“ “
1 Portuguese ensign	Thayer & Chapman (Boston)
1 set signal colors	“ “ “
1 mahogany case containing 1 day perspective glass and 1 night perspective glass	John Prince
2 patent log reels, 9 lb. wick yarn	Benjamin Felt
1 seine [30′ deep, 25 fathoms long, made of 3-thread net; the bunt ⅜″ mesh, the arms ½″ mesh]	James Sheafe (Portsmouth)
92 panes spare window glass	William Luscomb
4 2-hour [sand]glasses	Thayer & Chapman
6 ½-hour glasses, patent	“ “ “

12 patent log glasses	“ “ “
4 1-hour glasses	“ “ “
6 brass [speaking] trumpets	“ “ “
1 brass sextant	“ “ “
1 azimuth compass	“ “ “
4 brass compasses	“ “ “
1 amplitude compass	“ “ “
3 wood compasses	“ “ “
2 hanging [telltale] compasses	“ “ “
1 bundle, containing	
2 pieces narrow scarlet bunting	
2 pieces narrow crimson bunting	
4 pieces narrow white bunting	
1 piece narrow green bunting	
3 pieces wide blue bunting	
2 pieces narrow yellow bunting	“ “ “
3 signal colors	“ “ “
1 tangent screw quadrant	“ “ “
2 patent compass [binnacle] lamps	“ “ “
1 large chest for colors	“ “ “ or John Archer, Jr.

SURGEON'S (Hector Orr) INDENT

Item from indent	*Supplier (from bills)*
18 lbs. English mustard	Michael Webb
20 lbs. Souchong tea	“ “
8½ lbs. cannister tea	“ “
6 lb. box allspice	“ “
5 lb. box pepper	“ “
2 lb. box ginger	“ “
2 bags sugar (208 lbs.)	“ “
1 box chocolate (50 lbs.)	“ “
1 barrel rice (198 lbs.)	“ “
1 cask old French brandy (27 gallons)	“ “
2 casks Port wine (60 gallons)	“ “
4 casks sherry (124½ gallons)	“ “
1 cask best old sherry (33 gallons)	“ “
1 cask best Lisbon (33 gallons)	“ “
1 cask best Port (30 gallons)	“ “
2 barrels cranberries (6 bushels)	“ “
2 casks vinegar (113 gallons)	Jonathan Waldo
2 casks molasses (104 gallons)	Peabody & Perkins
4 hospital tubs	Robert Porter
2 grates & 2 iron pots [to make fires in the	

well and between decks to purify the air and dry the surrounding parts]	Seth Brooks
8 camp kettles	Joseph Newhall
12 stone jugs	“ “
4 teapots	“ “
4 tea kettles	“ “
4 dozen table spoons	“ “
2 dozen small table spoons	“ “
2 sugar boxes	“ “
2 tea cannisters	“ “
3½ dozen quart pots	(?)
2½ dozen pint pots	(?)
4 large saucepans	Joseph Newhall (2)
6 small saucepans	(?)
4 bedpans	(?)
4 urinals	(?)
200 quills	Thomas C. Cushing
1 ream paper	“ “ “
2 books for Memoirs	“ “ “
1 ink chest	“ “ “
3 boxes wafers	“ “ “
1 black sand [for blotting]	“ “ “
2 account books	“ “ “
1 slate	“ “ “
4 ink powders	“ “ “
1 bell for loblolly boy	“ “ “
1 lantern	Joseph Newhall

Contents of Medicine Chest and Supplies Prepared by Eliakim Morse (Boston)

Item	*Translation (not contemporary)*
15 lbs. pulv Cort peru Opt	Powdered Peruvian bark
8 oz. Ipecac	Ipecac
4 lbs. pulv Jalap	Powdered jalap
1 lb. pulv Rhu	Powdered rhubarb
1 lb. Galle Aleppo	Astringent
10 lbs. Cream Tartar	Cream of tartar
4 lbs. Gum Arabic	Gum arabic
½ lb. Tart Emetic	Antimony potassium tartrate
½ lb. Tart Vitriol	Vitriolated tartar
2½ lbs. Calomel pp	Calomel
½ lb. Merc precip Rub	Mercurial precipitate of rhubarb?
4 oz. Merc Coros Sub	Mercurial chloride corrosive sublimate

1 lb. Magnesia Alb	White magnesia
30 lbs. Sal Glauber	Glauber's salts
6 lbs. Sal Nitri	Nitric salt
2 lbs. Sal Ammon Crude	Natural sal ammoniac
½ lb. Sal Ammon Vol	Volatile sal ammoniac
1 lb. Sal Tartar	Potassium carbonate
2 lbs. Sace Saturni	Saccharum (acetate) of lead
1 lb. Allum	Garlic
1 lb. Vitriol Alb	White vitriol (zinc sulphate)
4 oz. Vit Rom	Roman, or blue, vitriol (copper sulphate)
4 lbs. Flor Chame	Chamomile flowers
4 lbs. Flor Sulph	Flower of sulphur
½ lb. Gum Aloes	Gum of aloes
4 oz. Gum Gamboge	Gum of Gamboge
1 lb. Gum Guiac [Guaiacum]	Gum of lignumvitae
1 lb. Gum Opium	Gum of opium
2 lbs. Gum Camph	Gum of camphor
4 oz. Gum Hino	?
4 oz. Gum Assafoetid	Gum of asafedita
1 lb. Gum Myrrh	Gum of myrrh
1½ lbs. Bals Capive	Balsam of Copaiba
1 lb. Bals Trumatic	Traumatic Balsam
1½ lbs. Cantharides	Cantharides (Spanish fly)
9¾ lbs. Oil Ricini	Castor oil
4 lbs. Ol Olive	Olive oil
2 oz. Oil Anise	Oil of anise
2 oz. Ol Menthe Vals	Oil of peppermint
2 lbs. Elix Vitriol	Sulphuric acid
2 lbs. Elix paragorick	Paregoric
1 lb. Est [?] Saturni	? of lead
1 lb. Acc^{d} Vitriol Fort	Concentrated vitriol
2½ lbs. Tinct Thebaic	Tincture of tobacco
3 lbs. Spt Nitri Dulc	Sweet spirits of nitre
1 lb. Spt Lavender Comp	Spirits of lavender compound
2 bott[les] Terebenth	Spirits of turpentine
2 lbs. Spirit Sal Ammon Vol	Spirits of volatile sal ammoniac
3 lbs. Vini Rut^{d}	Wine of ?
½ lb. Vin Antimo	Wine of antimony
½ Æther Opt	Vinous spirits with vitriolic acid
2 lbs. Sapo Linement	Soap liniment
2 lbs. Rad Gentian	Gentian root
2½ Rad Serp Virg	Virginia snakeroot
2 lbs. Cort Aurant	Orange peel
1 lb. Cinnamon Opt	Cinnamon
1 oz. Caustic Lunar	Silver nitrate

½ lb. Cera Alb	White wax
3 lbs. Mell dipurated	Clarified honey
2 lbs. Emp Adhaesio	Adhesive plaster
5 lbs. Ung Merc Fort	Strong mercurial ointment
10 lbs. Ung Basil Flav	Yellow basil ointment
4 lbs. Ung Lap Calam	Calamine unguent
4 lbs. Emp Simplex	Simple plaster
2 Saturni	Lead
4 lbs. Epispastic	Blistering agent
2½ Spongia Opt	Sponge
4 lbs. Sapo Castill	Castile soap
2 lbs. Semi Sinap	Mustard seed
4 lbs. Semi Lini	Linseed
4 lbs. Fol Senna	Senna leaves
2 doz. Ess pep mint	Essence of peppermint
½ lb. Sal Absinth	Salt of wormwood
4 oz. Glass Antimo	Antimony
¼ lb. Nutmegs	Nutmegs
¼ lb. Mace	Mace
4 lbs. Cera Flav	Yellow wax
1 bottle Chaviliar Ruspine Styptic	? styptic
1 lb. Emp Decanius	? plaster
1 lb. Semi Annis	Anise seed
4 oz. Verdegrease	Verdigris
1 oz. Ol Cloves	Oil of cloves
6¼ gallons Lemmon Juice Kegg	Lemon juice
11 lbs. Tamerinds	Tamerinds
28 lbs. Sago	Sago
9 lbs. Salop puls	Salop powder
5 boxes Ess Spruce	Essence of spruce
210 lbs. Scotch Barley 2 Casks	Scotch barley
56 lbs. pearl Barley	Pearl barley
35 lbs. Oatmeal Tubb	Oatmeal
125 lbs. Linseed Meal Bbl.	Linseed meal
4 lbs. Axungia porcine	Pig kidney fat
3 casks porter 24 doz.	Port wine
50 lbs. portable Soup	Concentrated soup
2 doz. penis syringes	
1 glyster [enema] syringe	
2 doz. Bouges & Case	
2 Bolus Knives	
2 slabs	
2 papers pill boxes	
4 glyster pipes, mounted	
4 doz. vials	

4 glyster pipes, separate
10 doz. cocks
1 marble mortar & pestle
1 box scales & weights
2 funnels
4 head
6. 18 Tail
6. 12 Tail
2. T
3. 4 Headed
5. 2 Headed
6. Compress
2 doz. rollers
25 yards India Cotton
16 yards Bleached Russia Sheeting
5 yards flannel
10 yards muslin
5 tourniquets
2 sets whalebone splints
12 sheets pasteboard
4 pieces tape
1 lb. patent lint
4 lbs. common lint
8 lbs. old linen
9 lbs. Tow carded
4 oz. twine
4 skeins silk
2 oz. thread
100 needles
4 papers pins
12 quire wrapping paper
4 elastic steel trusses
1 double headed truss
4 sheep skins
1 mahogany case containing amputating instruments
1 mahogany case containing trepanning instruments
1 mahogany case containing Navy instruments
2 pouch pocket instruments
6 thumb lancets & cases
3 pillows for fractures
½ doz. lint knives
2 yards hat case
12 compaissers
1 doz. rollers
1 medicine chest, painted & trimmed
17 white flint, glass stopped spice 2-lb. bottles
13 white flint, glass stopped 2-lb. bottles

21 white flint, glass stopped 12-oz. bottles
12 vials
3 white galley pots
9 striped blue & white 4-lb. galley pots
3 striped blue & white 2-lb. galley pots
8 black bottles
1 black glass stopped bottle
1 large painted storechest
6¼ gallon lemon juice keg
2 boxes for sundries
1 cock screw
1 pair scissors
1 pair large handles for medicine chest
1 iron mortar & pestle

Mastmakers' Bills

LUKE M. LAIGHTON

1799 Cap^t Joseph Waters Agent for Frigate Essex
to Luke M Laighton Dr

June 20th	$ cts
To makeing 736 ¾ inchs of Mast work Oak work Tops Cheeking Mast &c	538.82
To 5 days to Wolftenborough affter Cheek pieces 2/ Day	10.
To paid Col Dearborn for his Assistance & horse	4.50
To boat hire & 1 hand to Cross wenepusoque pond and my expences at M^r Jewetts	6.50
To paid M^r Perkins on Acc^t of Cheek pieces	53.
To M^r Hall's bill for horse & Sulky hire	12.50
To M^r Rindges bill for Oak plank 460 ¾ feet	16.75
To M^r Penhallow's bill for Nails for tops &c	9.16
To 18 pine plank cont^g 900 feet	10.83
To 21 pine boards cont^g 460 feet	4.50
To 1 bbl Tar	1.50
To M^r Sheafe's bill for 1 bbl Varnish	15.
To M^r Blasdel's bill for Oil	5.83
To 2 tons timber for Oak work	13.33
To 1 piece for Caps (condemnd)	5.50
To 1 piece for Fore Cap	3.
To 1 piece of Oak for Bowsprite fish & panches	15.
To 2 hands affter said piece	2.50
To my time & 1 hand assisting to get bowsprite in sloop	2.
To Capt Goves bill for himself & 2 horses and my time affter Cheeks for Foremast	7.50
To paid for said Cheeks	20.
To M^r Sheafe's bill for plank for supporters	3.92
To M^r Latmans bill for plank for Crosstrees and panch for Miz^n Mast	8.7
To 1 elm piece for Main Cap	2.
To paying over Mast work &c	12.
To ropes & my time rafting spars	6.
	789.71
Omitted Charging July 14th my time at Dover to agree for Cheek pieces	4.
and ½ day for my Father & horse hire to find piece for Bowsprite Fish	2.
Dollar	795.71

HAWKES & BABBIDGE

Capt Joseph Waters Salem Oct^{r} 1799
For Ship Essex, to Hawkes & Babbidge D^{r}

	To 40 poles @ 1/ 1 Spar 11 Inches @ 2/ P^{r}	£ 3. 2.0
Decem^{r}	" 8 . . 3^{gn} . . 14^{lb} Junk @ 24/ P^{r}	10.13.0
	" two pair of topmast Crosstrees @ 60/	6. 0.0
	" Making Main Truselltrees & Crosstrees	6.10.0
	" 21 feet 6 Inch Stuff @ 2/ P^{r}	2. 2.0
	" 4 Swinging Booms @ 24/	4.16.0
	" 4 Lower Studding Sail Yards @ 12/	2. 8.0
	" 4 topmast d^{o} d^{o} d^{o} @ 12/	2. 8.0
	" 4 topgallant d^{o} d^{o} d^{o} @ 6/6	1. 6.0
	" A Mizen Boom 84/ flying Jibboom 27/	5.11.0
	" A Main Mast, Boom, Bowsprit, & Gaft for the Long Boat @ 48/	2. 8.0
	" 2 Masts & two sprits for the Barge @ 24/	1. 4.0
	" 2 Masts Yards & sprit for the Cutter @ 24/	1. 4.0
	" 2 Masts & two sprits for the Yawl 18/	18.0
	" A Main Topmast Cap 18/	18.0
	" A Main Cap 66/	3. 6.0
		£ 54.14.0
		\$182.33

Received payment & for which have given
duplicate Bills & Receipts

Hawkes & Babbidge

Mast & Spar Dimensions

From The *Essex* Papers

(1) Proposal of Jonathan Gamell Davis, 1 February 1799.
(2) Undated list, probably early winter 1799.
(3) Undated list.
(4) Proposal of Nathaniel Guptail, Berwick, Maine, 20 February 1799; also identical list in the handwriting of Enos Briggs, no date.
(5) Contract between Nathaniel Guptail and the Salem Frigate Committee, 20 February 1799.

Note: dimensions given below show (a) *length in feet, and* (b) *diameter in inches.*

	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)	
SPAR	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
Mainmast	84	27	84	27	85	[ ]	85	27	84	27
Foremast	78	25½	78	25½	75½	[ ]	75½	26	79	26
Mizzen	74	19	74	19	71½	[ ]	71½	21	75	21
Bowsprit	54	[ ]	54	[ ]	54	[ ]	54	26	54	26
Jibboom	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	40	14	40	14
Main topmast	56	[ ]	56	[ ]	55	[ ]	55	18½	55	18½
Fore topmast	53	[ ]	53	[ ]	51	[ ]	51	18½	53	18
Mizzen topmast	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	40	14	40	14
Main topgallant mast	30½	18	30	[ ]	40	[ ]	40	12	43	12
Fore topgallant mast	28½	15	28	[ ]	37	[ ]	37	11½	41	11½
Mizzen topgallant mast	24½	11	24	[ ]	33	[ ]	33	9½	34	9½
Main yard	[ ]	[ ]	84	[ ]	80	[ ]	80	20	80	20
Fore yard	[ ]	[ ]	72	[ ]	72	[ ]	72	19	77	19
Crossjack yard	52	[ ]	52	[ ]	52	[ ]	52	14	54	14
Main topsail yard	57	[ ]	57	[ ]	58	[ ]	58	14	58	14½
Fore topsail yard	54	[ ]	54	[ ]	52	[ ]	52	13½	54	13½
Mizzen topsail yard	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	40	10½	42	10½
Main topgallant yard	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	37	[ ]	37	10	40	10
Fore topgallant yard	37	[ ]	37	[ ]	35	[ ]	35	9½	37	9½
Mizzen topgallant yard	30	[ ]	30	[ ]	28	[ ]	28	7½	30	7½

Main royal yard	30	[ ]	30	[ ]	30	[ ]	30	7	30	7
Fore royal yard	30	[ ]	30	[ ]	27	[ ]	27	6	30	7
Mizzen royal yard	30	[ ]	20	[ ]	20	[ ]	20	5	20	5
Main lower studdingsail booms	42	[ ]	42	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	44	[ ]	40	10
Fore lower studdingsail booms	42	[ ]	42	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	44	[ ]	40	10
Main topmast studdingsail booms	29	[ ]	29	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	40	10	30	7
Fore topmast studdingsail booms	29	[ ]	29	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	36	10	30	7
Mizzen topmast studdingsail booms	[ ]	[ ]	29[?]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	26	7	[ ]	[ ]
Main topgallant studdingsail booms	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	29	7	27	6
Fore topgallant studdingsail booms	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	27	6	27	6
Mizzen topgallant studdingsail booms	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	20	5	[ ]	[ ]
Spritsail yard	52	[ ]	52	[ ]	52	[ ]	52	13½	54	13½
Spritsail topsail yard	40	[ ]	40	[ ]	35	[ ]	35	10	[ ]	[ ]
Driver Boom	60	[ ]	60	[ ]	57	[ ]	57	14	57	14
Mizzen Gaff	54	[ ]	54	[ ]	46	[ ]	46	11	46	11
Head of Spars (only those given listed)										
Mainmast	—		—		12		12		—	
Foremast	—		—		11½		11½		—	
Mizzen	—		—		10		10		—	
Main topmast	—		—		7½		7½		—	
Fore topmast	—		—		7		7		—	
Main topgallant mast	—		18		15		15		—	
Fore topgallant mast	—		15		14		14		—	
Mizzen topgallant mast	—		11		12		12		—	

From The Josiah Fox Papers (Peabody Museum)

(1) Item No. 564—“Spruce Pine Spars Wanted at the Navy yard Washington 16th Augt 1805”.
(2) Letterbook No. IV, page 257—“Dimensions of Masts Yards &c of the Frigate Essex”—no date, but from the placement in the book probably 13 January 1808.
(3) Item No. 566—“Dimensions of Masts yards &c Frigate Essex,” dated “Navy Yard (Washington) 1st April 1809”. (Partly illegible from waterstain.)

Note: Length and head dimensions in feet; diameter in inches

	(1)		(2)			(3)	
	Length	*Diameter*	*Length*	*Diameter*	*Head or Arms*	*Length*	*Head or Arms*
Mainmast	—	—	85.7	26⅝	13.8	85.7	13.8
Foremast	—	—	77.4	24¼	12.8	77.4	12.8
Mizzen	—	—	73.4	18¼	10.8½	73.11	10.8½
Bowsprit	—	—	55.	26¼	36.8	[illegible]	
Jibboom	—	—	39.3½	11⅜	26.2	[“]	
Flying jibboom	45	8¼	43.8	7⅞	17.5	[“]	
Main topmast	—	—	51.4	15⅞	7.5¼	57.4	7.5¼
Fore topmast	—	—	46.2½	15⅞	6.8¾	46.2½	6.8¾
Mizzen topmast	—	—	38.6	12.	5.6½	38.6	5.6
Main topgallant mast	40.4	9	25.8	9.	18.2¾	[illegible]	
Fore topgallant mast	38.	8¾	23.1½	9.	16.4¾	[“]	
Mizzen topgallant mast	30.	7	19.3	7.	13.8¼	[“]	
Main skyscraper mast	—	—	39.6	—	—	14.4	[Head?]
Fore skyscraper mast	—	—	34.9½	—	—	13	
Mizzen skyscraper mast	—	—	29.	—	—	10.4	
Main yard	—	—	82.	18½	3.5	80	
Fore yard	—	—	69.8	16.	2.10¾	72	
Crossjack yard	—	—	55.3	12¼	2.3⅛	65	
Main topsail yard	—	—	58.6	13.	4.10	58.6	

Fore topsail yard	—	—	49.1¼	10¾	4.1	54	
Mizzen topsail yard	42	9½	36.10	8¼	2.1½	41	
Main topgallant yard	36	8½	39.	8⅛	2.2	39	
Fore topgallant yard	33	8	32.8½	6⅞	1.10	36	
Mizzen topgallant yard	27	7	24.7	5⅛	1.4	27	
Main royal yard	27	6½	29.3	6¼	12½	26	
Fore royal yard	25	6	24.7	5⅛	10¼	26[?]	
Mizzen royal yard	20	5	18.5	3¾	6½	18	
Main lower studdingsail swinging booms	44	9½	24.6	4⅞	—	53.8	
Fore lower studdingsail swinging booms	39	8½	24.6	4⅞	—	—	
Main lower studdingsail yards	25	5½	—	—	—		[illegible]
Fore lower studdingsail yards	23	5	—	—	—	—	
Main topmast studdingsail booms	38	8¼	42.6	8½	—	42.6	
Main topmast studdingsail yards	25	5½	24.5	5	—	24.6	
Fore topmast studdingsail booms	36	8	36.4	7¼	—	38.3	
Fore topmast studdingsail yards	22	5	20.9	4¼	—	22.3	
Main topgallant studdingsail booms	30	7½	30.3	6⅛	—	30.9	
Main topgallant studdingsail yards	19	4¾	17.4	3½	—	17.7	
Fore topgallant studdingsail booms	28	6½	25.7	5	—	28.6	
Fore topgallant studdingsail yards	17	4	14.6	3⅞	—	16.4	
Mizzen topgallant studdingsail booms	—	—	—	—	—	21.6	
Mizzen topgallant studdingsail yards	—	—	—	—	—	12.4	
Main royal studdingsail booms	—	—	20.	4	—	20.6	
Main royal studdingsail yards	—	—	11.6	2½	—	11.9	
Fore royal studdingsail booms	—	—	17.1	3⅜	—	19	

MAST & SPAR DIMENSIONS (*continued*)

	(1)		(2)			(3)	
	Length	*Diameter*	*Length*	*Diameter*	*Head or Arms*	*Length*	*Head or Arms*
Fore royal studdingsail yards	—	—	9.9½	1⅞	—	10.10	
Spritsail yard	34	8½	49.1½	10¾	2.0½	34	
Spanker boom	—	—	55.3	10¾	—	53.3	
Gaff	42	9	38.6	8¾	—	35.6[?]	
Ringtail boom	30	6¾	24.7	5.	—	[illegible]	
Ringtail yard	14.	4¼	12.3	4.	8	12.3	
Driver yard	28	5½	32.8½	6⅞	—	—	
Ensign staff	32	7½	—	—	—	—	
Jack staff	16	4¾	—	—	—	—	
Dolphin striker below cap	—	—	13.1	6½	—	—	

◆

Miscellaneous Equipment

Among the many hundred receipted bills in The *Essex* Papers are various items of hardware, equipment, and services which are not covered by the accompanying accounts or indents. Several of these are worth noting.

A notation in William Hackett's handwriting, at an unspecified time during the building process, calls for the following items of hardware:

cupboard turns & locks
Brass HL hinges
Brass hooks
Brass ring locks
Knob latches
Cabin doors: locks—2 6½″ brass, 2½″ thick
hinges:2 pr. HL brass 7½″
2 " brass cut hinges 3″
2 " " " " 2½″
2 spring latches for Gallery doors
Copper ring & staple for a scuttle
Clasps & staples of arms chest

Other pieces of equipment, noted elsewhere, include one brass padlock for the magazine door; one tin poop lantern and one tin top lantern, both supplied by Levi Hawkes; one Japanned speaking trumpet; one dozen chair bolts (for securing chairs to the deck in rough weather); twelve horn lanterns; two cabin desks; twelve sailors' chests; and white rope for the wheel and cabin gun breechings.

The ship's bell was supplied by Joseph Brown, but the maker of it is not given. There is no indication from the papers that the *Essex* was originally fitted with a belfry. Alden Briggs, the blacksmith, made fifteen large screws for the bell, tiller, and wheel, and also charged for "Iron work for hang y^{e} Bell to y^{e} Ship," while Enos Briggs charged six dollars for "Fixing & hanging the Ships Bell." It is possible, therefore, that it was first mounted on a bracket attached within a gallows or near the break of the forecastle deck. She had a "belfry" by 1809.

The ship's wheel is equally elusive. The *Essex* Papers do not suggest whether or not it was a double-wheel. Hackett's original draught (Fig. 33) shows one with twelve spokes but turned ninety degrees from its true orientation. James Gould turned its barrel, spokes, and heads; Enos Briggs' men assembled it; and Alden Briggs made the large screws to fasten the barrel housing to the deck.

Painting & Glazing

Capt Joseph Waters for Committee for buildg Essex Frigate
for plumming paintg & Glazg to William Luscomb Dr

			Cents mills	
1799	To	196lb of Putty	@ 11 1	$ 21.75.6
Augt 26	"	36 Gallons of Black Varnish	@ $1	36.
	"	10 Gallons of Spirits	@ 1	10.
	"	19 Days Work puttyg Nail heads	@ 1.50	28.50
	"	7127lb of Plummers Work	@ 7 Cts	498.89
			m	
	"	749lb of Sheet Lead	@ 9 7	72.65.3
			m	
	"	Settg 16 Squares of Glass 19 by 16	@ 91.6	14.65.6
	"	Settg 8 Ditto of Ditto 23 by 9	@ 75.	6.
	"	Settg 4 Do of Do 17 by 15	@ 83.3	3.33.2
	"	Settg 36 Do of do 10 by 12	@ 30.6	11. 1.6
	"	Settg 12 Squares in light house	@ 16.7	2. 3.2
	"	Mendg 2 Ditto of 10 by 12	@ 33.3	66.6
	"	Mendg 3 Sqrs of 23 by 9 in Quarter Galleries	@ 83.3	2.49.9
	"	1 Paint Brush @ Cts 36.1		36.1
	"	Painting 5344 Yards @ 25 Cents		1335.
	"	Paintg 1025 Yds @ 20 Cts		209.
	"	Measuring the above Work		4.
				$2256.35.1

I have given Duplicate Bills and Received
Payment from Capt Joseph Waters Naval Agent
Salem Decr ye 28th 1799
Errors Excepd pr Wm Luscomb

Sails

Salem October 19th 1799

Cap^{t} Joseph Warters for Frigate Essex

To Buffum & Howard D^{r}

To making a suit of sails with 186 Blt^{s} duck @ \$3 p^{r} Blt	\$558.
To 4 suits for the Boats with 6 Blt^{s} do	18.
To making 259 Hammocks @ 55 cen^{t} & 10 Cots @ \$3	172.45
To making 9 tarpawlins for the Hatches @ \$1	9.
To making 14 Masts & pump coats @ 75 cen^{t} & 1 rudder coat 150	12.
To making 4 Hammock cloths @ \$4 & 2 screens @ 2	20.
To making 2 Awnings \$23 & 2 covers for Boats 8.50	31.50
To making 2 Wind sails \$7.50 & 1 smoak do 2	9.50
To making 8 tarpawlins for Arm Chests \$4 & 18 Chair bottoms 1.80	5.80
To trimming Cap^{t} Cot	2.17
	\$838.42

Received payment & for which have given
duplicate Bills & Receipts

Buffum & Howard

Sailcloth supplied by the Salem Duck Manufactory

Grade	*Quantity*	*Unit price/bolt*	*Total*
1	42 bolts + 44½ yards	\$19.00	\$819.69
2	30 " + 3 "	18.67	561.54
3	7 " + 5 "	18.33	130.56
4	16 " + 13 "	18.00	294.00
5	48 " + 19 "	17.67	856.76
6	44 " + ½ "	17.33	762.75
7	18 " + 1 "	17.00	306.44

Sails for the Essex manufactured by Buffum & Howard

Squaresails

1 spritsail topsail
1 spritsail course
1 fore course
1 fore topsail
1 fore topgallant sail
1 fore royal
2 fore lower studdingsails
2 fore topmast studdingsails
2 fore topgallant studdingsails
1 main course
1 main topsail
1 main topgallant sail
1 main royal
2 main lower studdingsails
2 main topmast studdingsails
2 main topgallant studdingsails
1 mizzen topsail
1 mizzen topgallant sail
1 mizzen royal

Fore & aft sails

1 flying jib
1 jib
1 fore topmast staysail
1 fore staysail
1 main staysail
1 main topmast staysail
1 main middle staysail
1 main topgallant staysail
1 mizzen staysail
1 mizzen topmast staysail
1 topsail staysail (mentioned in Boatswain's indent but not by Buffum & Howard)
1 boom driver
1 mizzen driver
1 storm staysail

Shipyard Site

During the late autumn of 1973 the author, together with members of the Peabody Museum staff and volunteer corps, undertook several on-the-spot investigations of Winter Island with the aid of a metal detector to pinpoint, if possible, the exact site where the frigate *Essex* was built. Several minor artifacts from the appropriate era were unearthed, yet none could be identified in any way with the ship's construction. The runways and helicopter pads at the abandoned United States Coast Guard Air Station, which almost entirely cover the ground over the only two possible sites, limited the search to the beaches. Even should the apron surfaces be removed at some time in the future, it is doubtful if subsequent investigations would add much to the knowledge of the area due to the extensive bulldozing and regrading which took place around the hangar at the time the seaplane facility was built.

Topographical and historical evidence, therefore, must be called into play if the site of the shipyard is to be calculated with any precision. The accompanying map of Winter Island—in essence a composite of several modern and late nineteenth-century maps—suggests the terrain, most of which is unchanged except for the small rise (leveled when the apron was built) between the two coves marked "A" and "B" and the interruption of the natural slope of the hills toward the water where it intersects the regraded pad southwest of the aircraft hangar. Changes in the shoreline have also taken place over the centuries, but not so drastically since 1799 as to make the building site of the *Essex* impossible to identify. A manuscript map of Salem, which bears no date but appears to have been done after 1790 but before 1802, happily demonstrates the fact that no substantial change has taken place since that time in the outline of Winter Island except in the most northerly area on Juniper Cove.

During the summer of 1874, Salem historian William Leavitt and Captain William Dean Waters, accompanied by a reporter from the *Salem Gazette*, who characterized them as "venerable and well preserved citizens," toured areas of Salem Neck and Winter Island. The results of their "ramble" were published on 11 August of that year.

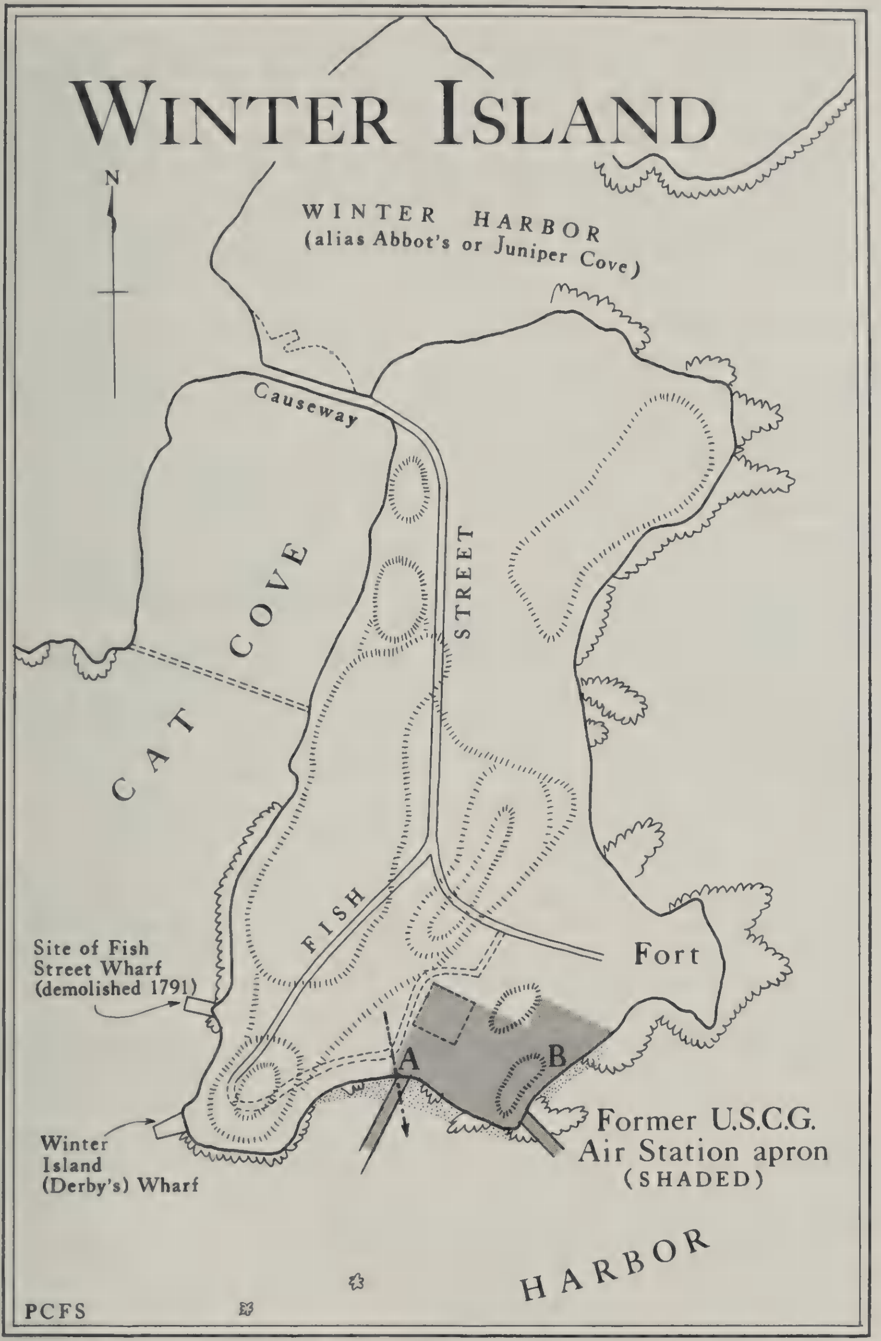
WINTER ISLAND
N
WINTER HARBOR
(alias Abbot's or Juniper Cove)
Causeway
CAT COVE
STREET
FISH
Site of Fish Street Wharf (demolished 1791)
Fort
A
B
Former U.S.C.G. Air Station apron (SHADED)
Winter Island (Derby's) Wharf
HARBOR
PCFS

FIG. 63. Map of Winter Island and the shipyard site.

> The particular object of this afternoon's walk was to have designated the exact spot where the *Essex* was launched, it having been pointed out to Capt. William D. Waters by his father, Capt. Joseph Waters, who was employed by the subscribers as their agent in the building of the vessel . . . The spot, as the present Capt. Waters remembers it, was what is now the small gravelly beach sheltered by a little cove a short distance to the west of Fort Pickering. The visitor would readily distinguish it, not merely on account of the beach, but because of the fact that it is obviously the fittest place for the building and launching of a vessel, to be found in that vicinity.

The presumed spot recollected by Captain Waters, marked "A" on the accompanying map, was so designated by William Lewis Welch in his 1896 additions to C. A. Putnam's 1854 map of Winter Island, published in volume XXXIII (1897) of the Essex Institute *Historical Collections*. Captain Waters' identification aside, this site remains the most logical for the reasons suggested below.

Only Coves A and B are possible from practical considerations. A site north of the fort is unlikely because of its exposure to storms off the sea and because of the impracticability of either protecting it or supplying it. Similarly, the western shore of the island is impossible, not only because no part of it is topographically suited to the construction of a vessel the size of the frigate but also because nowhere along Cat Cove was there adequate depth of water for launching.

Cove B, with its small, rock-studded beach seems like a pale substitute for the broad sweep offered by the other. Further, it is virtually *under* the fort, not "a short distance to the west," and would have been more southerly of the 1799 fort than westerly. Its one virtue is that a vessel launched from thence, if that were possible, would reach maximum harbor soundings with the shortest possible run.

Cove A, on the other hand, afforded far superior conditions of terrain. Save for the rise on the point between the two beaches, the hills on Winter Island tend to lie along the western half of its length. To launch a vessel the size of the *Essex*, the ways would have required an incline of approximately five to six feet for every fifty feet of their length. Thus, from high-water mark towards the interior of the island, a rise of some fifteen to eighteen feet would have been necessary. The natural slope of the hills down toward Cove A would have provided almost ideal conditions, whereas no such topography appears to have been available behind Cove B.

Two means of transporting timber and supplies to Winter Island were available in 1799. By land, wagons crossed the Causeway and proceeded down Fish Street, which then forked left to the fort or right to Winter Island Wharf on Palmer's Head. No other roads or cartways are known, those shown on the map with dotted lines being of relatively modern origin. Supplies arriving by water had no alternative landing place but Winter Island Wharf. The southwestern extremity of the island, therefore, was by far the most easily reached by available conveyances.

It is the author's best guess that the *Essex*'s blacksmith shop was located on or near the promontory of Palmer's Head and that the timber yard was on the slope of the hills just to the south of the fork in the road.

The Reverend William Bentley's description of the launching itself almost serves to clinch the building site. He mentions "the whole adjacent shore" being covered with spectators. No person stationed anywhere on Salem Neck, except atop one of its hills, could have had any kind of a view if the launching took place from Cove B; the mass of Palmer's Head would have obstructed the view to anyone stationed along Cat Cove, whereas spectators watching from further down toward Neck Gate would have been able to see relatively little either. Bentley also was at pains to describe the quarter-dollar seats (obviously built in the best and most commanding situation) "on the western side of the ship & near the water," within which were the seats for the Frigate Committee, "in Banks." No banks, or bleachers, west of the frigate and in the choicest location would have been possible at any place except up the side of the hills rising from Cove A.

The dotted line with an arrowhead, shown on the accompanying map, therefore represents the probable site for the ways of the frigate *Essex*. The hills dictate the angle shown. So, too, do the several navigational hazards within the harbor, one of which (before being blasted out to prevent seaplanes from hulling themselves) was bare at low water when Nathaniel Bowditch conducted his surveys of the harbor in 1804 to 1806.

One further scrap of evidence tends to confirm this site. When Edward Preble arrived in Salem on 7 November 1799 to take command of the *Essex* he noted in his journal, "I found the Ship moored between her two bowers in 5 fath^{s} water muddy bottom about half a league from the town, the flag staff on Fort Pickering bearing NE b E 3 Cables length dis^{t} Our dis^{t} off shore 2 Cables lengths from the spot on which the Ship was built. . . ." Taking into consideration the compass variation in 1799 and the length of a cable as 600 feet, a plot of these statistics superimposed on a modern harbor chart puts "the spot on which the Ship was built" at dead center of Cove A.

Turning

Capt Joseph Waters for
1799 September the frigate Essex } to James Gould Dr

to turning 12 posts at 36 Cnts pr	$4.32.0
to turning 14 banesters at 18 Cnts	2.52.0
to turning 8 posts at 1–72	13.76.0
to turning barrel Spokes & heads of the Ships wheel	5.66.0
to 2 formers at 18 C	0.36.0
to turning a traveller for the viol	1.50.0
to 36 Lintstocks at 17 Cnts pr	6.12.0
to 10 6 pound tomkins at 9 C	0.90.0
to 2 Spunges & Ramers at 1 dollar	2. 0.0
to 1 6 pound Ladle	2. 0.0
to 1 powder horn	0.50.0
to 52 tomkins for 12 pounders at 12½ C	6.50.0
to 30 tomkins for 6 pounders at 8 C	2.40.0
to 72 handspikes at 50 C	36. 0.0
to Altering 22 Carraiges at 3 dlrs	66. 0.0
to fixing 13 ladles for 12 pounders at 1 dol	13. 0.0
to fixing 5 ladles for 6 pounders at 68 Cnts	3.40.0
to fixing 26 Wormers at 34 C	8.84.0
to fixing 10 Wormers at 34 C	3.40.0
to 26 Spunges & Ramers for 12 pounders at 2 d[ollars]	52. 0.0
to 10 Spunges & Ramers for 6 pounders at 1 d	10. 0.0
to heads for 13 Rope Spunges & Ramers at 68 C	8.84.0
to heads for 5 Rope Spunges & Ramers at 50 C	2.50.0
to 36 powder horns at 1 d	36. 0.0
to 26 Spare Wheels at 2 dls	52. 0.0
to 6 port fires at 17 Cts	1. 2.0
to fixing the Leather to 6 Cartridge tubs	6. 0.0
to heads for 18 Spare Ladles at 34 Cts	6.12.0
To 26 12 pound Carriages at $28	728.
“ 10 6 “ ditto 16	160.
	$1241.66

Received payment & for which have given duplicate
Bills & Receipts James Gould

Glossary

Glossary

The following are greatly simplified explanations of some of the terms which appear in the narrative section of this book. Full definitions are to be found in such nautical dictionaries as W. Falconer's *An Universal Dictionary of the Marine* (London, 1776) and subsequent editions, Admiral W. H. Smyth's *The Sailor's Word-Book* (London, 1867), and Gershom Bradford's *The Mariner's Dictionary* (Barre, Massachusetts, 1972).

Anchor: *Bower* anchors are carried at the bow and are in constant use. The best bower is heavier than the small bower and is usually employed on the starboard side. *Stream* anchors are smaller than the bowers and are used to ride steady, for warping, or for general work. *Kedge* anchors are smaller still and are used for warping and keeping a ship clear of the bower cable while riding in a harbor.

Ballast: *Shingle* ballast is composed of beach stone or gravel. *Kentledge* (q.v.) is a more permanent form of ballast.

Battening Yards: Yards strengthened by laying on and hooping additional oak battens to them.

Beams: Those timbers supporting a ship's decks and placed athwartships.

Bees: See Bowsprit.

Bevel Boards: Lengths of board upon which have been scribed the various angles at which frames and other members must be beveled at any given station for snug fitting of adjacent members.

Bitts: Various, the most important being the *cable bitts*. This is a frame composed of two strong pieces of timber in the fore part of the ship, bolted upright to the beams, and upon which the cables are fastened when the ship rides to anchor. Ships of war generally had two pairs of cable bitts. A *bitt stopper* is a length of rope rove through the knee of the bitts, which nips the cable on the bight to secure it.

Bobstay: Rigging below the bowsprit to confine it downward to the stem (q.v.) and to counteract the strain of the foremast stays.

Boom Iron: A metal ring fitted on the yardarm, through which the studdingsail boom traverses. There is one on each topsail yardarm, but on the lower yards there is a second which opens to allow the boom to be triced up.

Bowsprit Bees: Pieces of wood bolted to the outer end of the bowsprit, through which reeve the fore-topmast stays.

Brace: In the context used here, braces refer to the rudder braces, or gudgeons. These are secured to the sternpost and receive their opposite numbers, the pintles (q.v.), fastened to the rudder. The two in combination act as pivoting hinges.

Breast Hooks: Long horizontal knees (q.v.), placed at different heights at the bows, internally, to unite the stem with the bows on each side.

Breast Rail: The upper rail of the ballustrade on the fore part of the quarterdeck.

Breast Stanchion: The ballustrade capped by the breast rail (q.v.).

Bridle Port: The foremost gunport in the bows, usually used for taking in moor-ing bridles but occasionally for mounting bow chasers.

BOOMKIN (BUMKIN): A short boom projecting from each bow, used to extend the clue of the foresail to windward.

BURTON: A type of purchase. The *top burton* was used to set up or tighten the shrouds or to move heavy objects in the hold or on deck.

CABLE: The heavy line attached to the anchors, normally 200 yards in length, thus often being used as a measure of distance.

CAPS: The thick blocks of wood fitted at the mastheads to join lower masts to topmasts, topmasts to topgallants, etc., as also the jibboom to the bowsprit.

CARLINES: Timbers supporting the decks of a ship, running fore and aft, or perpendicular to the beams (q.v.).

CATHEAD: A timber extending over each bow, secured inboard to the structural timbers, and used primarily for weighing the anchors.

CEILING: The lining of planks on the inside of the ship's frame (q.v.).

CHAIN WALES (CHANNELS): Broad, thick planks projecting horizontally from the ship's side, through which pass the chain plates, giving greater spread to the rigging. *Channel wales* are strakes (q.v.) worked between the gun deck and the upper deck and receive the bolts of the chain plates.

CHEEKS: Projecting parts on each side of the lower masts, below the masthead thereof, to support the trestletrees (q.v.), the frame of the tops (q.v.), and the heel of the topmasts.

CHOCK: In the context used here, a form of wedge to confine the bowsprit near the inboard heel.

CLAMPS: Thick planks forming strakes (q.v.), worked inboard and running fore and aft, upon which the ends of the beams rest.

COCKPIT: The domain of the midshipmen on the lower deck as also where the wounded were treated by the surgeon.

COUNTER: The after part of a vessel's hull, or the under side of the overhang of the stern.

CROSSTREES: Timbers supported by the cheeks (q.v.) and trestletrees (q.v.). At the upper end of the lower masts they support the frame of the tops; at the upper end of the topmasts they serve to extend outward the topgallant shrouds.

CUTWATER: The forward side of the stem (q.v.).

DOG STOPPER: A length of rope put on to enable the men to bitt the cable (q.v.), or to shift the eyes of the messenger (q.v.) past the capstan for the heavy heave.

DOVETAIL: A dovetail-shaped metal plate let into the heel of the sternpost and the keel to bind them together; also for connecting the stem foot to the forward end of the keel.

EKEING: Pieces of wood fitted by butting and scarfing, here used to suggest the curved members of the head under the catheads (q.v.).

FASHION PIECE: The aftermost timbers of a vessel which give shape to the stern.

FILLING ROOM: A small area of the magazine (q.v.), partitioned off, where powder is started from the casks to fill cartridges.

FISH TACKLES: The tackles employed to hook and draw up the flukes of an anchor, after catting, to stow it.

FLOOR TIMBERS: The lowest timbers of a ship's frame, resting directly upon the keel.

FRAME: The vertical skeleton structure of a vessel, between and perpendicular to planking and ceiling (q.v.) and secured to both.

FUTTOCKS: Separate pieces of timber which, when secured together, form individual frames of a ship.

FUTTOCK PLATES: Iron bands fitted to the lower deadeyes of the topmast shrouds. They pass through holes in the rim of the top and are attached to the futtock shrouds.

GAMMONING: Turns of rope lashing passed successively over the bowsprit and through a hole in the cutwater to secure the bowsprit at the knightheads (q.v.) and to support the foremast stays.

GEER: Actually "Jeer" or "Jear." Tackles by which the lower yards are hoisted or lowered along the mast.

GRUB BEAM: The beam (q.v.) at a break in the deck.

GUNWALE: See Planksheer.

HAMMOCK CLOTHS: Cloths laced down over the hammock nettings on deck to prevent the hammocks stowed therein from becoming wet.

HAWSEPIECES: Timbers in the bows of a vessel through which the hawse holes are cut to receive the anchor cables.

HEAD PUMP: A small pump at the bow, used mostly for washing decks.

HEAD RAILS: The short rails of the head, curved, extending from the after side of the figurehead to the cathead (q.v.).

HEADSETTER: A man whose specialty it was to perform the joiners' work for the ship's head; also, frequently, comparable work on the quarter galleries.

HEEL: The lower, or inboard, end of any mast, bowsprit, or jibboom. The term "foxing the heel" means trimming it to fit a cap or step.

HOUNDS: Wooden projections at a masthead. With the lower masts, these are termed cheeks (q.v.).

HOUSING: See Tumble Home.

JOINT HOOPS: Metal bands ordinarily fitted around a joint or scarf for additional strength. The joint hoops provided for the *Essex* do not indicate that her original masts were "made" or built up, as would be the usual inference.

KEELSON: An internal keel, laid fore and aft upon the middle of the floor timbers (q.v.), all being bound together to the keel by long bolts driven through and clenched.

KENTLEDGE: Pigs of cast iron for use as ballast and stowed along the keelson.

KNEES: Although there are numerous varieties in shipbuilding, knees are essentially either lodging or hanging, that is, horizontal or vertical. They are right-angle timbers cut from crotches of trees, used at the intersection of other timbers to strengthen the joint.

KNIGHTHEADS: Two large timbers, one rising from each side of the stem (q.v.), supporting the bowsprit between them.

LIGHT ROOM: A small room partitioned off from the magazine (q.v.) by double-glazed windows to permit light to reach the magazine without the danger of igniting the powder.

MAGAZINE: The room, low in the ship, where the ship's supply of gunpowder is stored.

MAST COAT: Canvas fitted over the wedges around a mast where it passes through a deck, to prevent water from getting below.

MATCH ROPE: A length of loosely laid rope steeped in a solution of nitre. It burns at an even rate and is used to light the portfires (q.v.) for firing the guns.

MESSENGER: A large cable-laid rope used in unmooring a ship. It is rigged as an endless rope attached to the capstan, the cable to be heaved in being nipped to it until it comes abreast of the capstan.

OAKUM: Old rope unlaid and picked to pieces. Rerolled loosely and tarred, it is used for caulking.

OG (OGEE): A curved molding with an S-shaped cross section.

ORLOP DECK: The lowest deck of a vessel, consisting of a platform laid over beams in the hold, for coiling cables or for small cabins and storerooms.

PARCEL: To wind tarred strips of canvas around a rope after worming (q.v.) but prior to serving (q.v.). The rhyme rule is: Worm and parcel with the lay / Turn and serve the other way.

PINTLES: The metal hooks attached to the rudder of a ship which fit into the braces (q.v.) on the sternpost.

PLANKSHEER: Pieces of plank covering the timber heads around the ship; also the gunwale or covering board.

PLATFORMS: Gangways running fore and aft on the port and starboard sides of the waist (q.v.) or temporary decks used as storerooms on the orlop deck (q.v.).

PORTFIRE: A stick used to convey fire from the match rope (q.v.) for firing the guns; also sometimes used for signals.

PUMP COAT: Canvas nailed around a pump where it passes through a deck, to prevent seepage of water into lower decks.

QUARTER GALLERIES: The projections at the vessel's port and starboard quarters containing windows and the officers' seats of ease.

RINGTAIL BOOM: A boom rigged in and out upon the main or driver boom and upon which a ringtail sail can be bent.

ROLLING TACKLE: Tackle (q.v.) used to prevent the yards from swaying in heavy weather.

RUDDER COAT: Canvas affixed to the rudder, encasing the opening in the counter (q.v.), to prevent the sea from rushing in through the rudder hole.

SCRIVE BOARD: Normally, a section of flooring in a mold loft upon which the ship's lines are lofted.

SCUPPERS: Holes cut through the waterways (q.v.) to carry water off the deck into the sea.

SERVING: To serve, that is, to wrap spun yarn around a rope after worming (q.v.) and parceling (q.v.).

SHEERS (SHEARS) or SHEER LEGS: A form of derrick made of two or more spars, lashed together at their uppermost ends and supported by guys, for raising heavy weights, as hoisting in the lower masts of a ship.

SMOKESAIL: A small sail hoisted against the foremast when a ship rides head to the wind, to prevent smoke from the galley being blown onto the quarterdeck.

STEM: The foremost timber of a ship, the lower end of which is scarfed to the keel.

STEP: A large clamp of timber fixed on the keelson (q.v.) or lower deck to receive the heels of the lower masts.

STERNPOST: The opposite equivalent of

the stem (q.v.), scarfed to the keel and upon which the rudder is hung.

Strake: In much of New England, as elsewhere, pronounced "streek." A line of planks running the length of a vessel. The *black strake* is that immediately above the wales (q.v.), covered with a mixture of tar and lampblack. A *thick strake* is a line of plank wrought from the stem to the sternpost and is of greater dimension.

Tackle: A purchase composed of blocks and ropes.

Taffrail: The upper part of a ship's stern, the ends of which join into the quarter pieces.

Topmast Fid: A bar of iron, or wood, to support the weight of the topmast. The fid must be withdrawn before the topmast can be sent down.

Top Tackle: A large pendant used to send up the topmast.

Tops: Platforms built upon the heads of the lower masts.

Transom: The athwartship timbers of a vessel, bolted to the sternpost. The *Transom Sleeper* is a timber lying fore and aft in the bottom of the ship, a knee (q.v.) connecting the transoms to the after timbers on the ship's quarters.

Trestletrees: Two bars of timber fixed horizontally fore and aft on each side of a masthead, used to support the next higher mast, crosstrees (q.v.), and, in the case of the lower trestletrees, the tops.

Tumble Home: That part of the ship's side which curves inward above the point of extreme breadth.

Waist: That portion of the main deck in a ship of war between the fore and main hatchways.

Wales: The thickest strakes (q.v.) in a vessel, port and starboard sides, running fore and aft.

Wardroom: The messroom of the commissioned officers. By custom, the captain is permitted to enter only by invitation.

Waterways: Deck planks along the sides, forming channels to carry water off into the scuppers (q.v.).

Windsails: Funnels of canvas, kept open by hoops, used to ventilate the interior spaces of the ship. They are suspended by whips over an opening on deck.

Worming: To worm, that is, to pass small stuff spirally between the lays of a cable or other piece of cordage, preparatory to parceling (q.v.) and serving (q.v.).

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LC—Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
MHS—Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
PM—Peabody Museum of Salem, Salem, Massachusetts.
PRO—Public Record Office, London.

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Index

Index

Active, ship, 48, 96
Adams, U.S. frigate, 251
Adams, President John, 14, 15, 26, 27, 36, 37, 98 (attends launching of *Boston*), 145f (excluded from *Essex* launching), 150, 152, 173
Alert, H.M. sloop of war, 195
Allen, Edward, 187
Allen, Edward, Jr., 32
Alliance, Continental frigate, 11, 45, 51, 52, 54 (illustration), 55, 67–68 (dimensions)
Amelia, sloop, 16
America, ship of the line, 45, 142 (illustration of launching ways)
America (3rd), ship, ex-*Blonde*, 19, 20 (illustration), 21, 24, 26, 27, 35, 58
America (4th), ship, 52
Andover, Massachusetts, 57
Antelope, brig, 48
Appleton, William, 32
Archer, Capt. —, 96
Archer, John, Jr., 275, 282
Archer, Samuel, 32, 277, 279
Argus, U.S. brig, 251
Arrogant, H.M.S., 189
Ashton, Jacob, 32, 40, 50, 51, 211, 233
Astrea, ship, 40, 49
Atlantic, British whaler, later *Essex Junior*, which see, 197

Babbage, Benjamin, 135
Babbidge, Benjamin, 278
Babbidge, Rev. Charles, 171
Babbidge, John, 171
Bacon, Josiah, 275
Badger & Blake (stagemen), 123
Bainbridge, Capt. William, U.S.N., 190, 195
Baker, Joseph, 243
Balch, Jonathan (pumpmaker), 132, 133, 167, 171, 271
Bancroft, Thomas, 32
Barbary Powers, U.S. relations with, 12, 13, 190, 191
Barker, Francis, 240, 244
Barker, Hannah, 244
Barker, John, 269
Barnes, Sarah, 244
Barnes, William, 241, 244
Barnewall, Edward, 199
Barr, Abigail, 240
Barr, John, 32
Barr, William, 240
Barron, Capt. James, U.S.N., 191
Barron, Commodore Samuel, U.S.N., 191
Bartlett & Brown, Messrs., 132, 154
Bartlett, Walter Price, 32
Basset, John, 276
Batavia, xiv, 173, 190
Batchelder, Nathaniel, 32
Bath, Maine, 76
Beale, Lt. Richard C., U.S.N., 166, 168, 182, 245
Beckett, —, 98
Beckett, John, 32, 47, 175, 177
Beckett, Retire (shipbuilder), 47–50, 52, 57, 58, 96, 149 (view of shipyard), 175
Beckford, Ebenezer, 31, 32
Belisarius, ship, 23 (illustration), 24, 26, 35, 37, 50, 187, 188
Benson, Francis, 239, 243
Benson, Mary, 239, 243
Bentley, Rev. William, 17, 23, 30, 31, 48, 50, 59, 65, 91, 100, 137, 139, 140, 145, 146, 149, 160, 163, 300, 301
Berwick, Maine, 76, 77, 290
Beverly, Massachusetts, 30, 113, 155–57
Bigelow, Asahel, 245
Biglow, William, 60, 61 (portrait), 141, 166
Bishop, Samuel, 240, 242
Black, John, 144
Blake, William P. & L., 278
Blasdel, —, 288

Blonde, French corvette, later *America* (3rd), which see, 20
Boston, U.S. frigate, 70–72 (contract with joiners), 71 (illustration), 75, 76, 81–82 (spar dimensions), 85, 86, 98 (launching), 109, 111, 115, 132, 146, 164, 169 (complement), 174, 251
Boston, Massachusetts, 46, 70, 71, 75, 76, 85, 87, 88, 96, 98, 106, 108–10, 113, 115, 122, 124, 125, 132, 145, 151, 167–71, 174, 179–84
Boston Frigate Committee, 85, 109–11, *passim*
Boston Frigate Subscription, 22
Bott, James, 271, 274
Boudret, C., 20
Bowditch, Ebenezer, 268, 277
Bowditch, Nathaniel, 57, 58, 301
Bowker & Stoddard, 212
Boxford, Massachusetts, 57
Boylston, Hannah, 240, 243, 244
Braintree, Massachusetts, 49
Breaming a Salem schooner, illustration, 110
Bridgewater, Massachusetts, 166, 168
Brien, Hannah, 240, 243
Brien, Thomas, 240, 243
Briggs, Alden (blacksmith), 49, 64, 66, 67, 69, 83, 93, 115, 119, 123, 133, 160, 207, 211–13, 269–71, 275, 295
Briggs, Anna, 137
Briggs, Daniel, 49, 67, 69
Briggs, Elijah, 234, 237
Briggs, Elisha, 49, 67, 69
Briggs, Enos (shipbuilder), xvi, 8–9 (view of shipyard), 32, 49 (selection as *Essex* Constructor), 50, 52, 53, 55–61, 64–70, 85, 96–98, 111, 115, 125, 133, 135, 141, 144, 146, 148–51, 185, 186, 203, 207, 212, 233–37, 246, 270, 290, 295
Briggs, James, 49
Briggs, John, 49
Briggs, Sarah, 50
Briggs, Seth, 49
Briggs, Thomas (ropemaker), 136, 137, 139, 140, 144, 145, 152, 178, 186, 266, 268, 274, 275
Brimmer, Martin, 102, 183
Broad Fields, Salem, 89
Brodie, Alexander, 86, 99
Brooks, Samuel, 32
Brooks, Seth (blacksmith), 93, 119, 133, 178, 213ff, 266, 269, 271–74, 283
Brooks, Timothy, 139
Brown, Jonathan, 68
Brown, Joseph, 275, 295
Brown, Nathaniel, 71, 72
Brown & Abbot, 151
Brown & Askean, Messrs., 202
Browne, Benjamin F., 152
Browne, James, 268, 269, 271, 274, 278, 281
Brutus, ship, 19
Buck, sloop, 121
Budgen, Thomas, xvii
Buffington, Sally, 52
Buffum, Samuel (sailmaker), xvii, 32, 90, 91, 93, see also Buffum & Howard
Buffum & Howard (sailmakers), 64, 90, 93, 144, 160, 175, 207, 267–69, 276, 297, see also Buffum, Samuel and Howard, John
Burk, Thomas, 243
Burnham, Elizabeth, 240, 242
Burnham, Enoch, 240, 242
Burnham, Isaac, 241, 243
Burnham, Moses, 240, 242
Burnham, Moses, Jr., 242
Burnham, Polly, 243
Burr, Abigail, 242
Burr, William, 242
Burrill, —, 96, 97
Burrill, Samuel & Son, 132
Butler, Alice, 240, 244
Butler, Benjamin, 240, 244
Butler, John, 242
Butler, Walter, 242

Cabot, Major Joseph, 32
Calley, Lydia, 36
Callum, David, 240, 243

Callum, Sarah, 240, 243
Campbell, Capt. Hugh G., U.S.N., 191
Cantondale, Massachusetts, 82
Cape Ann, Massachusetts, 166, 170, 184
Cape Henry, 193
Cape Horn, 10, 195, 201
Cape of Good Hope, 7, 10, 173, 190
Cape Town, 190
Carnes, —, 10
Carnes, Hannah, 241
Carnes, Jonathan, 10
Carpenter, —, 10
Carpenter, Benjamin, 32
Carrico, John, 240, 243
Carrico, Mary, 240, 243
Castine, Maine, 166
Cat Cove, Salem, 30, 300
Chase, Abijah, 157
Chase, Abner, 175
Chase, Philip, 157
Checkley, John Webb, 124
Cherub, H. M. sloop, 197, 198, 201
Chesapeake, U.S. frigate, 13, 113 (kentledge illustration), 171, 193, 251
Chipman, Elizabeth, 36
Chipman, Thomas, 32
Clap, William T., 276
Clark, Capt. —, 169
Clarke, George, 239, 244
Clarke, Mary, 244
Clarke, Samuel, 242
Clarke, Samuel, Jr., 242
Cleopatra's Barge, hermaphrodite brig yacht, 52
Codman, John, 102
Collyer, Isaac, 239, 242
Congress, U. S. frigate, 13, 14, 80, 86–88, 103, 107, 113, 117, 121 (launching), 135, 154, 167, 169, 170, 173, 174, 179–82, 185, 189, 191, 195, 251
Connecticut, U.S. ship, 164, 171
Constellation, U.S. frigate, 13, 15, 19, 191, 251
Constitution, U.S. frigate, 13, 15, 19, 44, 73, 75, 87, 106, 153, 191, 195, 251
Copper, technology for fastenings, 73, 75
Corwin, Jonathan, 57
Cotterell, Daniel, 244
Cotton, Solomon, 171, 172
Courtis, William, 93
Cowes, Isle of Wight, 195
Cox, Capt. George, U.S.N., 191
Crescent, tribute frigate, 14, 87
Crowell, John G., 199
Crowninshield, —, 10
Crowninshield, Benjamin, 20, 21 (portrait), 26, 151, 152, 187
Crowninshield, Clifford, xv, 32
Crowninshield, Elizabeth, 36
Crowninshield, George & Sons, 7, 19, 21–23, 27, 35, 37, 40, 50, 58, 133, 141, 187
Crowninshield, George, 10, 26, 188
Crowninshield, George, Jr., 52
Crowninshield, Jacob, 20, 21 (portrait), 35, 52
Crowninshield, John, 21, 23, 188
Crowninshield, John C., 152
Crowninshield, Richard, 19, 35, 48
Crowninshield wharf, 21
Currier, William C., 69
Curtis, Admiral Sir Roger, R.N., 189
Curtis, Thomas, 239, 242
Curtis, William, 154, 160
Cushing, Thomas Croade, 32, 37, 60, 61 (portrait), 278, 283
Cutter, Levi, 245
Cyane, H.M.S., 153

Daland, John, 32
Daland, Thorndike, 121
Dale, Commodore Richard, U.S.N., 190
Dalton, John, 240, 243
Dalton, Sarah, 240, 243
Daniels, John, 240, 243
Danvers, Massachusetts, 57, 64, 103
Darling, David, 113
Davis, Jonathan Gamell, 76, 290
Day, James, 240
Day, James, Jr., 242
Dean, George, 277, 278
Dean, Mary, 62, 68
Dean, Michael, 240, 242

Dean, Samuel, 240, 242, 244
Dean, William, 277, 278
Dearborn, Colonel —, 288
Dennis, Francis Bowden, 50
Dennis & Waters, 97, 273, 274
Derby, —, 10
Derby, Elias Hasket, 7, 17, 29–32, 36, 40, 48–52, 59, 99, 112, 139, 141–44 (death of), 143 (portrait), 150, 152, 161
Derby, Elias Hasket, Jr., 32
Derby, Elizabeth, 164
Derby, Ezekiel Hersey, 32, 178–80, 183
Derby, John, 32
Derby, John Barton, 152
Derby, Mary, 164
Derby, Richard, 36, 161, 163, 164, 171
Derby, Richard, Jr., 32
Derby wharf (illustration), 8
Devereux, James, xv
Dickason, Thomas & Co., 85
Dixon, Vice Admiral, R.N., 201
Dodge, George, 32
Dodge, Israel, 32
Dodge, Pickering & Co., 275
Doggett, Elisha, 37
Dorr, Edward, 57
Douglas(s), Elizabeth, 240, 244
Douglas(s), John, 240, 244, 272
Dover, New Hampshire, 118, 124, 288
Downes, Lt. John, U.S.N., 197, 201
Dublin, Ireland, 202, 203
Dun Loaghaire, Ireland, 189, 202

East India Marine Society, xviii, 10
Edward, schooner, 112
Egyptienne, prize hulk, 201
Eldridge, Barsillai, 112
Eliza, brigantine, 17
Eliza, ketch, 52
Elliot, Simon, 124
Ellsworth Mission, 146
Emmerton, Ephraim, 32
Empress of China, ship, 7, 46
England, U.S. relations with, 11, 14, 195ff
Enterprise, U.S. schooner, 190, 251
Essex, U.S. frigate
  The *Essex* Papers, xiii–xvi (description of), xiv–xv (origin and acquisition of)
  Watercolor portrait of, by Joseph Howard, xvi–xvii (description of), xvii–xviii (origin and acquisition of)
  Frigate Subscription, 19–27 (early offers by the Crowninshields), 19–22 (Government actions to increase the Navy), 22–23 (first abortive subscription), 27–31 (renewed subscription), 32–36 (subscribers), 37–38 (formation of Frigate Committee), 39 (duty of subscribers), 38–40 (Secretary of the Navy's instructions to subscribers), 39 (Navy Agent to be appointed), 65 (subscription payments), 103 (illustration of subscription payment receipt)
  Frigate Committee, 40 (selection and early work of), 43–46 (selection of Superintendent by), 46–50 (selection of Constructor by)
  Building of, 57–58 (selection of shipyard site), 62–65 (appointment and responsibilities of Navy Agent), 65–67 (construction begins), 146–151 (launching), 169 (sailing orders for), 173 (sailing orders broadened), 185 (turned over to the United States), 187 (leaves Salem)
  Progress of construction, 112, 117, 118, 124, 160, 168, 169, 181, 182
  Evaluations of, v, 121, 188–89
  History of, 1800–1837, 189–203. Voyage to Batavia and return, 189, 190; Mediterranean cruise (1801–1802), 190; repaired at Washington Navy Yard (1802–1803), 190; Mediterranean cruise (1804–1806), 190, 191; laid up for repairs at Washington Navy Yard (1806–1809), 191–93; details of repairs, 191–93; European cruise (1810), 193–95; activities during War of 1812, 195–

201; Pacific cruise (1813–1814), 195–201; illustration of capture, 196; capture by *Phoebe* and *Cherub* (1814), 197–201; taken to England and laid up, 201–02; as prison hulk at Kingstown, Dublin Bay, 202–03; broken up (1837), 203
Administration of construction, 61–65, 68–69, 227–32
Allotments for crew's pay, 239–45
Anchors, 93, 95, 160, 178, 210
Armament, 169
Armorer's forge, 86, 111, 161, 210
Armorer's indent, 265–66
Ballast (see also Kentledge), 113, 178
Bell, 211
Blacksmiths' bills, 211–16
Blacksmith shop, 66
Blocks, 119, 217–24
Boats, 175, 177
Boat oars, 175
Boatswain's indent, 266
Caboose, see Galley Stove
Cannon, 108–11, 121, 166, 225, 226
Capstans, 176–77 (illustration), 226 (dimensions)
Carpenter's indent, 269–72
Carving, 119, 127, 128f
Casks, 155, see also Water casks
Cathead carving, 129
Colors, 131
Complement, 169, 170
Constructor's bills, 207–09
Contractual agreements, 70, 73, 76, 79–81, 107, 113–15, 122, 132, 154–57, 159, 160, 167, 173, 174
Contract prices, 55, 85, 207–09
Coopers, 156–57
Cooper's indent, 272
Copper castings, 111, 122, 123
Copper fastenings, 73, 75, 76, 88, 96–98, 100, 101, 111, 119, 122, 123, 211ff
Copper sheathing, see Sheathing
Copperwork, miscellaneous, 123, 124
Cordage, 119, 136, 137, 139, 178, 238
Costs and Wages, 55, 64, 65, 207–09
Design, 39, 53, 54
Dimensions, 67, 68, 186, 208, 246–64
Draught of lines, 53, 99, 104–05
Figurehead, 127 (illustration), 128
Galleries, 129 (illustration)
Galley stove, 85, 87 (illustration), 111, 160–61, 224
Glazing, 129, 296
Gun carriages, 144, 161 (illustration), 166–67, 225 (dimensions)
Gunner's indent, 273–75
Gunpowder, 121, 185
Headsetters, 115, 125
Hospital stores, 167, 168, 182, 282–87
Ironwork for masts and spars, 96, 116–19, 124, 125, 134–35
Kentledge, see also Ballast, 112, 113 (illustration), 122, 148, 154, 160
Lead, 122
Lightning rod, 123, 140
Lofting, 60, 61
Marines, 170, 184
Masts and spars, 76–79 (agreements with suppliers), 80–81 (agreement with sparmaker), 95, 96, 115–19, 124, 125, 133–34, 160, 175, 290–94 (dimensions)
Mast and spar ironwork, see Ironwork and "Joint Hoops" in Glossary
Mastmakers' bills, 288, 289
Match rope, illustration, 136
Military stores, 122
Miscellaneous equipment, 295
Officers, 40, 161, 163, 165, 166, 182, 239ff
Painting and glazing, 129ff, 296
Provisions, 157–60, 169, 173, 182, 184
Pumps, 136 (illustration), 122, 131–33, 167, 171–72, 182, 211ff, 217–24
Purser's indent, 275–81
Quarter galleries, 128
Recruiting, 164, 165, 169, 170, 182, 184

Essex, U.S. frigate (*continued*)
  Riggers and rigging, see also Cordage, 113–15, 135, 136, 160
  Rollers for tiller sweep, 123, 140, 211
  Rudder braces and pintles, see Copper castings
  Sailcloth and sails, 89–91, 93, 119, 144, 160, 297
  Sailing Master's indent, 281–82
  Sheathing copper, 73, 87, 88, 98, 111, 112, 154
  Sheathing nails, 111
  Sheathing paper, 124
  Shipyard site, 57–58, 298, 299 (map), 300, 301
  Shot, 102, 103, 106–08, 121, 122, 178–84
  Slops, 173–75
  Small arms, 122, 169, 173
  Stern decorations, 128
  Stores, 178, 182
  Supplies, 184–85
  Surgeon's indent, 282–87
  Timber, 55–57, 59–60
  Tinning and interior coppering, 160
  Trailboards, 127, 128 (illustrations)
  Turning, 302
  Water casks, 113, 155–57
  Wheel, 144, 211
  Workmen, 85, 98 (pay), 208, 209
Essex Junior, ship, ex-*Atlantic*, 197, 201
Eustice, Richard, 240, 242
Eveleth, Joseph, 269

Fame, ship, illustration of launching, 149
Fame, schooner, 154
Felt, Benjamin (blockmaker), 32, 119, 133, 217ff, 267, 269, 270, 274, 281
Ferret, U.S. schooner, 251
Fish packing illustration, 159
Fogerty, Butler, 178
Forrester, Simon, 16
Fort Pickering, Salem, see also Fort William, 164, 186, 187, 301
Fort William, Salem, 8, 86, 147 (views of); 59, 65, 66, 83, 146, 148, 152, 164 (renamed Fort Pickering, which see), 300
Fowler, James, 241, 244
Fowler, Priscilla, 244
Fowler, Samuel, 98, 99
Fowler, Thomas, 98, 99
Fox, Josiah, 57, 191–93
Foxall, Henry & Co., 109
France, U.S. relations with, 11, 14–17
Franklin, sloop, 111, 112, 121
Franklin, Benjamin, 167
French, Joshua, 128, 185
Fretch, William S., 243
Friendship, brigantine, 17, 50
Frye's Mills, Salem, 47

Galapagos Islands, 197
Gale, Edmund, 32
Gale, Martha, 240, 242, 243
Gale, Samuel, 240, 242
Gale, Samuel, Jr., 240, 243
Galsworthy, —, 203
Gardner, Ann, 240
Gardner, John, 47
Gardner, Jonathan, 240
Gardner, Richard, 47
Garner, Ann, 243
Garner, Jonathan, 243
Gaskell, Hannah, 51
George, ship, 52
George, brig, 16
George Washington, vessel, 100
Georgianna, British whaler, 197
Germantown, Quincy, Massachusetts, 46, 52
Gerry, Elbridge, 15
Gibbs & Channing, 175, 184
Gibraltar, 190, 191
Gilbert, Esther, 68
Gill, Robert, 109, 110
Gloucester, Massachusetts, 139
Glover, John, 93, 240, 244
Glover, John P., xviii
Glover, Mary, 244
Goodhue, Benjamin, 27–29, 28 (portrait), 31, 32, 36, 38, 40, 51, 68, 73, 145, 152

Goodwin & Co., 107
Gould, James, 32, 144, 166, 167, 273, 295, 302
Gouldsborough, Charles W., 173
Gove, Capt. —, 288
Gowan & Roberts, 236, 237
Grand Turk, ship, 7, 17, 40, 49, 50, 57
Gray, Abraham, 36
Gray, Benjamin, 239, 244
Gray, "Billy," see Gray, William, Jr.
Gray, Mary, 239, 244
Gray, Samuel, 32
Gray, William, Jr., xvi, 7, 16, 17, 29–31 (becomes Chairman of Frigate Committee), 33, 36, 40, 41 (portrait), 43, 44, 46, 47, 50, 65, 116, 139, 142, 150, 163–65, 169, 207, 211, 233, 269
Greene, Mary, 242
Guptail, Nathaniel, 79, 290
Gurley, Royal, 245
Gurnet Lighthouse, 181

Hacker, Isaac, 167
Hackett, Andrew, 53, 98, 234
Hackett, Col. James, 44, 45
Hackett, John, 44, 45
Hackett, Joseph, 44
Hackett, Theophilus, 44
Hackett, Thomas, 44
Hackett, William, xvi, 43–46 (appointed Superintendent), 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 60, 61, 64, 65, 67, 68, 70, 85, 98, 99, 111, 112, 115, 117, 123, 132, 133, 135, 149, 160, 171, 186, 188, 203, 207, 238, 246, 247, 295
Hall, —, 288
Hall, Benjamin, 275
Hallett, Benjamin, 111, 121
Ham, James, 117, 124, 125
Hamilton, Jonathan, 76, 79
Hampton Roads, Virginia, 191, 193, 195
Haraden, Ema, 242
Haraden, James, 239, 242
Haraden, Jonathan (ropemaker), 136, 138 (portrait), 139, 266, 268
Hardy, Martha, 36
Harriman, Ann, 242
Harriman, Moses, 239, 242
Hart, —, 71, 72
Haskel, Betsey, 241
Hathorne, Col. John, 33
Hathorne, William, 277
Hawkes & Babbidge (sparmakers), 160, 171, 175, 271, 289
Hawkes, Benjamin, 171
Hawkes, Levi, 295
Hay, Mary Elizabeth, xviii
Hay scales, Salem, 95
Hayden & Baxter, 278
Hazard (1st), ship, 47
Hazard (2nd), ship, 48
Head & Amory, 108
Henry, brig, 50
Herbert, Mary, 50
Higginson, Messrs. Stephen & Co., 69, 110–12, 225
Hill, Elisha, 3rd (blacksmith), 96, 115, 116, 119, 120, 124, 125, 134, 135
Hill, Hugh, 155, 156
Hill, Peter, 120
Hill, Phoebe, 120
Hiller, Joseph, 33
Hillyar, Capt. James, R.N., 152, 153, 197, 198, 201
Hodges, —, 10
Hodges, Benjamin, 16, 17, 33, 40, 48, 51, 77 (portrait), 79, 96, 97, 100, 103, 111, 211, 233
Hodges, John, 51
Hodges, Jonathan, 240, 244
Hodges, Mary, 36
Hodgkins, Eunice, 242
Hodgkins, Mary, 243
Hodgkins, Moses, 242
Hodgkins, Moses, Jr., 240
Hodgkins, Timothy, 242, 243
Hodgkins, William, 243
Hoffman, John, 174, 175
Hogan, Richard, 239, 243
Holmes, Jonathan & Sons, 95
Holyoke, Edward Augustus, 33, 93
Homan, Alice, 240, 244
Homan, Edward, 240, 244

Hope Furnace, 108
Hornet, U.S. sloop, 195, 251
Howard, John (sailmaker), see also Buffum & Howard, xvii, 32, 90–93, 92 (portrait)
Howard, Joseph, xvii, 93, 128, 131, 177
Howe, John, 122, 132
Humphreys, Joshua, 75
Hunt, Joab, 71, 72

Ingalls, John, 91
Intrépide, French privateer, 17

Jackson, General, 73
Jackson, Henry, 52
Jackson, John, 242, 245
Jeggle's Island, Salem, 58
Jenkins, Lawrence Waters, xiv
Jenks, Daniel, 33
Jenks, John, 31, 33, 175, 275
Jennison, Samuel, 239, 243
Jersey, prison ship, 164
Jewett, —, 288
John Adams, U.S. frigate, 192, 251
Johnson, Nicholas, 85, 99, 111, 112
Johnson, Sally, 240
Johnson, William, 240, 243
Jones, Edward, 46
Jones, James, 240
Jones, John C., 109
Jones, John Paul, 45
Jones, Jonas, 243
Jones, Peter, 202
Jones, Thomas, 240, 244

Keazer, Eleazer, 112
Kendall, Hannah, 243
Kendall, Jonathan, 243
Kendrick, Noah, 134
Killam, Asa, 33
Killin, Edward, 33
Kimball, Jonathan, 240, 242
King, Hannah, 51
King, James, 33
King, Seth, 274
Kingston, Massachusetts, 95
Kingstown (Dun Loaghaire), Ireland, 202
Kittery, Maine, 137
Knocker's Hollow, Salem, 5, 129
Knowland, Andrew, 241, 242
Knowland, Ann, 241, 242
Knowlton, Joseph, 240, 243
Knowlton, Lydia, 240, 243

Laighton, Elizabeth, 82
Laighton, Luke M. (sparmaker), 70, 80–82, 95, 96, 115–19, 124, 125, 133–35, 160, 271, 288
Lakeman, Sarah, 241, 243
Lakeman, William, 241, 243
Lambert, —, 10
Lambert, Jonathan, 33
Lander, Peter, 33
Lane, George, 243
Lane, Henry, 91
Lane, Mary, 243
Lane & Salter, 109
Lane & Son, 33, 276
Lang, Edward Symmes, 33, 168
Lang, William, 37
Lassel, Margaret, 240, 242
Latman, —, 288
Launchings, 17, 144 (illustration), 141–53
Lavinia, brig, 16
Lawrence, Abel, 33
Leach, Henry, 239, 240, 241
Lear, Tobias, 191
Leavitt, William, 298
Lee, Lt. George Gardner, U.S.N., 166, 170, 182, 184
Lee, Jonathan, 240
Lee, Susannah, 51
Leonard & Kinsley, 95
Leoradie, French privateer, 17
Lessel, Ann, 243
Lessel, John, 243
Levant, H.M.S., 153
Lewis, Elijah, 279
Light Horse, bark, 7
Lissel, John, 241
Lissel, Nancy, 241
Little Compton, Rhode Island, 137
Liverpool, England, 202

Livingston, Amey, 242
Livingston, James, 242
London, England, 202
Long Wharf, Salem, see Union Wharf
Lorient, France, 193, 194
Low, Rufus, 166, 243, 281
Low, Suckey, 243
"Lugger," the, 152
Luscomb, —, 151
Luscomb, William, 33, 64, 122, 129, 207, 268, 270, 274, 281, 296
Lydia, sloop, 111, 280

M^c^Clennan & Sanders (riggers), 70, 113, 135, 136, 154, 157, 160
M^c^Clennan, William, 113–15
McDaniel, George, 231
McHenry, James, 19, 35
McKay, Donald, 69
M'Knight, Stephen Decatur, 199
McIntire, Angier, 98
McIntire, Samuel, 64, 119, 126 (portrait), 127, 128, 130 (illustrations), 140, 142, 207
McIntire, Samuel Daniels, 33
McManus, Patricus, 240, 243
McManus, Seth, 240, 243
McMillan, Mary, 240, 243
Madison Island, 197
Magoun, Thatcher, 52
Major (Majer), Susanna(h), 239, 242, 243
Mann, Ebenezer (shipbuilder), 47–49, 52, 57
Manning, Mary, 51
Manning, Richard, 33
Manning, Richard, Jr., 33, 53, 82, 96, 152, 171, 180
Marblehead, 58, 91, 93, 146, 155
Marden, —, 81
Marquesas Islands, 197
Marshall, John, 15
Marshfield, Massachusetts, 49
Marston, William, 33, 275
Martin, —, 85
Martin, Elizabeth, 239, 244
Martin, Hannah, 240, 243
Martin, Isaac, 240, 243
Martin, John, 98, 99
Martin, Joseph, 239, 244, 266
Mason, —, 10
Mason, Jonathan, 33
Massachusetts, ship, 46, 49, 52
Massachusetts, Massachusetts state navy brigantine, 45
Masury, Betsey, 240
Masury, Elizabeth, 244
Masury, John, 240, 244
Masury, Samuel, 144, 240, 244, 273
Medford, Massachusetts, 49
Melcher, —, 80, 81
Melzard, George, 241, 244
Melzard, Sarah, 241, 244
Merrill, —, 85
Merrill, Abel, 69
Merrimac River, Massachusetts, 5, 7, 44, 83, 85
Merrimack, U.S. ship, 31, 38, 43 (illustration), 46, 51
Millet, Zebulun S., 240, 243
Milton, Massachusetts, 49, 67, 234, 237
Mitchell, Charles, 239, 242
Mocha Island, Chile, 195
Mold loft, view of, 62
Morgan, Lt. Thomas, R.N., 201
Morong, John, 33
Morris, John, 239, 243
Morris, Juanna, 243
Morse, Eliakim, 167, 168, 283
Mosely, Joseph, xv, 33
Moses, Joseph, 93
Moulton, Benjamin, 90
Mount Vernon, ship, 48 (illustration)
Mugford, Eunice, 244
Mugford, James, 244
Mugford, William, 17
Mumford, Sarah, 245
Mumford, William, v, 166, 173, 184, 189, 245, 275
Murphy, John, 33

Naugus Head, Marblehead, 146
Nautilus, U.S. schooner, 251
Navy Agent, see Waters, Joseph

Navy, U.S., establishment of, 13ff
Neal, David Augustus, 152
Neal, James, 240
Neal, Jonathan, 33
Neal, Sarah, 240
Neck Gate, Salem, 146, 301
Needham, Isaac, 17
Needham, John, 17
Neponset River, Massachusetts, 82
Nereus, H.M.S., 201
Newburyport, Massachusetts, 7, 23 (building subscription ship), 30, 31, 37f, 44, 49, 51, 69, 85, 98, 99, 111f, 164, 170, 175, 179
Newell, —, 174
Newhall, Joseph, 33, 122, 239, 243, 265, 266, 269, 271, 274, 275, 277, 283
Newhall, Rachel, 243
New Haven, Connecticut, 166
Newport, Rhode Island, 103, 166, 169, 170, 173–75, 182–84, 187, 189
New York, U.S. frigate, 251
New York, 111, 121, 190
New York Navy Yard, 195
Nichols & Hodges, see Nichols, Ichabod and Hodges, Benjamin
Nichols, —, 10
Nichols, David, 51
Nichols, George, 48, 51
Nichols, Ichabod, 16, 17, 33, 40, 46, 50, 51, 53, 61, 62, 76, 78 (portrait), 79–81, 95–97, 100, 111, 203, 211, 233
Niel, James, 243
Niel, Sarah, 243
Norfolk, Virginia, 193
Norris, John, 16, 17, 31, 33, 40, 47, 50, 65, 139, 211, 233
North River, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 5, 7, 49, 50
North River, Salem, 57
Nowell, Mary, 244
Nowell, Samuel York, 244, 245, 269
Nuku Hiva, Marquesas Islands, 197

Ober, Andrew, 239
O'Bryan, —, 198
Odenheimer, William H., 199
Orne, —, 10
Orne, John, 93
Orne, William, 7, 16, 31, 33
Orpheus, H.M.S., 189
Orr, Hector, 166-68, 282
Osborne, Henry, 33
Osburne, Capt., R.N., 189
Osgood, —, 10
Osgood, Isaac, 33
Osgood, John, 33
Osgood, Joseph, Jr., 33
Osgood, Nanny, 44
Otis, Harrison Gray, 73, 82

Page, Ashael, 239, 244
Page, Lucy, 244
Page & Ropes, 34, 151
Paine, Hannah, 244
Paine, John, 244, 245
Palmer, James, 202
Palmer's Head, Winter Island, 300
Parsons, Gorham, 70–72
Parsons, William, 88
Patten, David, 34
Patterson, William, 243
Peabody, Joseph, 16, 34, 142
Peabody Museum, xviii, 10, 127, 137
Peabody & Perkins, 139, 271, 275, 282
Peirce, Asa, 34
Peirce, Jerathmiel, 34, 50
Peirce, Jonathan, 160, 271
Peirce, Nathan, 34, 66
Pembroke, Massachusetts, 47, 49, 50, 52, 212
Penhallow, —, 288
Pepperell, Massachusetts, 171
Perkins, —, 288
Perkins, Isaac, 144
Perkins, Joseph, 157
Perkins, Thomas, 34
Perkins, Thomas Handasyd, 70f, 72, 85
Peter, Rev. Hugh, 5
Philadelphia, U.S. frigate, 190
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 109, 110, 112, 122
Phillips, Stephen, 10, 34, 142, 152

Phippen, Joshua, 278
Phipps, Lt. David, U.S.N., 166, 182, 245
Phipps, David, Jr., 245
Phoebe, H.M.S., 197, 198, 201
Pickering, John, 34
Pickering, Timothy, 14, 27, 31, 36, 51, 145, 152, 164
Pickman, Benjamin, 31, 34, 40, 42 (portrait), 51, 63, 65, 103
Pickman, Benjamin, Jr., 34
Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth, 14–16
Pinkney, William, 195
Plymouth, Massachusetts, 102, 103, 178–83
Plymouth, England, 195, 201–03
Polly, ship, 16
Polly, schooner, 112
Pool, Ward, 175
Porter, —, 198
Porter, Capt. David, U.S.N., 152, 153, 194 (portrait), 195, 197, 198, 201
Porter, Robert (cooper), 155, 156, 276, 278, 282
Portland, Maine, 163, 164, 190
Portsmouth, U.S. ship, 38
Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 14, 38, 40, 45, 51, 70, 79–82, 86, 96, 103, 107, 115, 119, 120, 121, 124, 125, 133–35, 160
Powder House, Salem, 121, 185
Preble, Ebenezer, 164
Preble, Commodore Edward, U.S.N., xvi, 153, 162–71, 162 (portrait), 173, 174, 177, 178, 181, 182, 184–90, 213, 216, 237, 245, 265, 280, 301
Preble, Capt. George Henry, U.S.N., xvi
Prescott, William, 34, 152, 153
President, U.S. frigate, 13, 190, 191, 251
Prince, John, 281
Princess, ship, ex-*Blonde*, 20
Protector, Massachusetts state navy vessel, 164
Providence, Rhode Island, 108
Purbeck, Aaron, 111
Putnam, C. A., 300
Putnam, David, 240, 242
Putnam, Frederick, 66
Putnam, Stephen, 240, 242

Quincy, Massachusetts, 145, see also Germantown

Rajah, schooner, 10
Randall, Thomas, 46, 165
Ranger, Continental sloop of war, 45
Rattlesnake, H.M.S., 189
Read, Nathan, 93, 95, 100, 103
Reed, Daniel, 240
Reed, Eleanor, 240, 243
Reed, William Besley, 240, 243
Revere, Joseph Warren, 73
Revere, Paul, 64, 73, 74 (portrait), 75, 76, 82, 96–98, 100, 101, 110, 119, 122, 123, 140, 151, 152, 271
Richardson, Capt. —, 121
Richardson (headsetters), 70, 115, 125, 233
Richardson, John, 115
Richardson, Joshua, 34
Richardson, Richard, 115
Rindge, —, 288
Rio de Janeiro, 201
Roberts, Jonathan, 234
Robinson, Hannah, 240, 244
Robinson, John, 90, 240, 244
Rodgers, Capt. John, U.S.N., 191, 195
Ropes, —, 10
Ropes, George, 21
Ropes, Hardy, 16
Ropes, Lydia, 51
Ropes, Mary, 51
Ropes, Samuel, Jr., 34
Ropes, William, 211
Ropewalks, 4 (map), 136–40, 144, 145, 152
Rose, servant of E. H. Derby, 142
Rose, Brackley, 34, 151
Russell, Edward, 111, 122
Rust, Daniel, 90, 100, 207
Rust, Jacob P., 274

Saba, servant of E. H. Derby, 142, 144, 152

St. Catherine, Brazil, 195
St. Helena, 190, 195
Salem, Massachusetts
  Composition of merchant fleet, 7, 10
  Dangers to shipping, 11ff
  Development of foreign trade, 7ff
  Essex shipyard site, 298–301
  Importance of, 7
  Losses of vessels, 12, 16, 17
  Map of, and surrounding area, 4
  Map of wharves (1798), 6
  Population (1798–1799), 18
  Ropewalks in, see Ropewalks
  Shipping initiative, 9, 10
  Shipyards and shipbuilding in, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 17, 47–50, 52, 57–58
  View of from Stage Point (1797), 8, 9
  View of from Salem Neck, 147
Salem Common, 83, 95, 137, 144
Salem Court-House, 37, 38 (illustration)
Salem Custom House (1805), 128
Salem Duck Manufactory, 4, 64, 89, 90, 100, 119, 144, 297
Salem Frigate Subscription, see *Essex*
Salem Gazette office, 37, 60
Salem Harbor, 3 (extent of), 57–58 (depth in)
Salem Iron Factory Company, 64, 93, 94 (illustrations), 95, 100, 113, 144, 160, 178, 210, 266
Salem Neck, 58, 59, 66, 137, 146, 298, 301
Salem Poor House, 119, 269, 270, 275
Salem schooner off shore, illustration, 181
Salisbury, Massachusetts, 43–45, 51, 53, 54, 65, 98, 111
Sally, schooner, 17
Sanders, Thomas, 34
Sanderson, Elijah, 34, 103
Sanderson, Jacob, 34, 103, 277
Sargent, Gustavus, 239, 240, 242
Saunders, John, 113–15
Scituate, Massachusetts, 49
Sears, David, 85, 86, 207, 276
Sears & Perkins, 265
Sever, Capt. James, U.S.N., 174, 185
Sewall, Samuel, 19
Seymour, Benjamin, 102, 103, 106–08, 119, 121, 122, 178–84, 273
Shallop Cove, Salem, 137
Shaw, Major Samuel, 46
Sheafe, Jacob, 45, 80, 86–88, 103, 106–08, 113, 154, 180, 183, 288
Sheafe, James, 281
Shed, Joseph, 245
Shed, Joseph, Jr., 245
Shipyards, see Salem
Sigourney, Charles, Jr., 121, 179, 180
Silsbee, —, 10
Simons, Mrs. —, 50
Simons, Samuel, 125, 233
Simpson, Charles, 244
Simpson, Sarah, 244
Six Brothers, brigantine, 17
Skerry, Samuel, Jr., 187
Sluman, Elizabeth, 244
Smith, Israel, 268, 269
Smith, James, 240, 244
Smith, Capt. John, U.S.N., 193, 195
Smith, Susannah, 240, 244
South Fields, Salem, 49, 50, 59
South River, Salem, 3, 5, 21, 49, 58, 83
Southward, Capt. —, 133
Spafford, James, 242
Sparrow, James, 240, 244
Spear, Fanny, 242
Stagecoach travel, 82
Stage Point, Salem, 8–9 (view of), 50, 58, 185
Stetson, Lincoln, 52
Stevens, Elizabeth, 51
Stevens, George, 242, 245
Stevens, Margaret, 242
Stewart, Capt. Charles, U.S.N., 153, 191
Stimpson, Stephen, 239
Stimpson, Thaddeus, 66
Stimson, Charles, 239
Stimson, Sarah, 239
Stimson, Stephen, 243
Stocker, Ebenezer, 51
Stoddert, Benjamin (Secretary of the Navy), 24–27, 25 (portrait), 29, 35, 38, 51, 53, 56, 63, 73, 75, 88, 89, 93, 107–09, 111, 112, 144,

155, 157, 158, 161, 163–67, 169, 171, 173, 175, 181, 182, 184, 239
Stone, Benjamin, 240, 244
Stone, Lovell, 240
Stone, Lovey, 244
Stone, Robert, 48
Stone, Robert, Jr. & Co., 270, 275, 277
Story, James, 243
Story, Sarah, 243
Stoughton, Massachusetts, 95
Strout, Joseph, 165
Subscription ships, 18
Sun Tavern, Salem, 36, 167
Swasey, Rebecca, 52
Sweetser, James, 242
Sylvester, Samuel, 243
Syren, U.S. brig, 251

Tagus, H.M.S., 201
Talleyrand, 15, 56, 60
Tangiers, 191
Tavern, Benjamin Webb's, 46, 106, 151
Tay, —, 151
Thayer & Chapman, 171, 184, 269, 271, 272, 275, 277–81
Thayer, Ephraim, 270
Thomas, —, 99
Thomas, Rachel, 242
Thomas, Samuel, 240, 242
Thomas, Sarah, 52
Thorndike, —, 59
Three Friends, schooner, 113, 122
Topsfield, Massachusetts, 57
Townsend, Moses, 34
Trafford, Rachel, 239, 243
Trafford, William, 239, 243
Treadwell, John, 34
Trefry, William, 240, 242
Trenton, New Jersey, 164
Tripoli, 191
Tucker, John, 175
Tucker, Samuel, 93
Tuftonboro, New Hampshire, 124
Turner, Christopher, 47, 52
Turner, John, Jr., 52
Turner, Thomas, 68, 69, 231, 232
Tuttle, Hannah, 240, 242
Tyrannicide, sloop, later brig, 45

Union Wharf, Salem, 8 (view of), 21, 58, 64, 83, 95, 99, 111, 119, 121, 136, 154, 180
United States, U.S. frigate, 13, 15, 19, 251
Upton, Edmund, 34
Upton & Porter, 34, 135, 151, 159, 271, 275

Valparaiso, Chile, 195, 197, 198, 201
Very, Joseph, 241, 244
Very, Samuel, 34
Very, William, 241, 244
Victory, H.M.S., 86
Vincent, Joseph (ropemaker), 34, 136, 137, 139, 266, 268, 275
Vincent, Matthew, 137
Vixen, U.S. brig, 251

Wait, Aaron, 34
Wait & Peirce, 139
Waldo, Jonathan, 34, 275, 282
Walker, Moses, 239
Wallace, Ann, 241, 242
Wallace, James, 241, 242
Ward, Capt. —, 81
Ward, John, 277
Ward, Joshua, 34, 151, 152
Ward, Samuel, 95
Ward, Samuel Curwen, 240, 244
Ward, William, 34
Warren, U.S. ship, 99, 170, 179
Warren, Massachusetts, 93
Washington, George, 13, 93, 120
Washington Navy Yard, 190, 191, 292ff
Wasp, U.S. sloop of war, 251
Waters, Benjamin, 68
Waters, Joseph (Salem Frigate Navy Agent), v, xiv, xv, 16, 33, 34, 36, 51, 62–65, 68–70, 73, 75, 81, 85–90, 93, 95, 96–99, 101–03, 106–19, 121–25, 132–35, 144, 154–61, 164, 165, 167, 171–75, 177–85, 187–89, 203, 207, 208, 212,

213, 215, 218, 239, 241, 275, 288, 289, 296, 297, 300, 302
Waters, William Crowninshield, Jr., xiv
Waters, William Dean, xv, 298, 300
Watson, Messrs. James & Ebenezer, 39, 111, 112, 121
Webb, Benjamin, 46, 60, 68, 106, 151
Webb, Benjamin, Jr., 34
Webb, Michael, 34, 282
Webb, Stephen, 34
Webb, Thomas, 34, 240, 242
Webb's Tavern, see Webb, Benjamin
Welch, William Lewis, 300
Welker, Elizabeth, 243
Wellington, Thaddeus, 159, 275
Wellman, Timothy, 16, 48
Wellman, Timothy, Jr., 34
Wenham, Massachusetts, 57
West, —, 10, 188
West, Benjamin, 16, 48
West, Benjamin, Jr., 34
West, John, 240, 243
West, Nathaniel, 16, 35
Weymouth, Massachusetts, 49
Wheatland, —, 10
Whitehill, Walter Muir, xiv
Whitlock, Thomas, 240, 242
Whittemore, James, 239
Whittemore, Joseph, 239, 243
Wild, Micah, 281
Williams, —, 10
Williams, Isaac, 35
Williams, John, 281
Williams, Mary, 245
Williams, Simon F., 245
Williams, Thomas, 149
Wilmer, Lt. —, 199
Winder, William, 63, 227–230
Winn, —, 178
Winnipesaukee, Lake, New Hampshire, 124, 288
Winter Island, Salem, 30, 58–59 (description), 83, 84 (aerial view), 86 (view of), 97, 98, 121, 128, 144–46, 147 (view of), 148–51, 149 (view of), 151, 152, 171, 186, 298–301 (site of *Essex* shipyard)
Winter Island wharf, 112, 113, 148, 154, 166, 300
Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, 288
Woodberry, Herbert, 243
Woodberry, James, 240, 242
Woodman, Daniel, 244
Woodman, Lucy, 244
Wright, James, 275
Wright & Briggs, 273, 275

Yalding, James, 157

The Frigate Essex *Papers:*
Building the Salem Frigate, 1798–1799
by Philip Chadwick Foster Smith
has been printed for the Peabody Museum of Salem
to commemorate
the one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversaries
of the establishment of the Museum
and of the
launching of the United States frigate *Essex.*

This book was composed in Linotype Monticello with Caslon display by The Anthoensen Press of Portland, Maine, and was printed by The Meriden Gravure Company of Meriden, Connecticut. Binding was by Craftsmen Bookbinders of Portland, Maine.

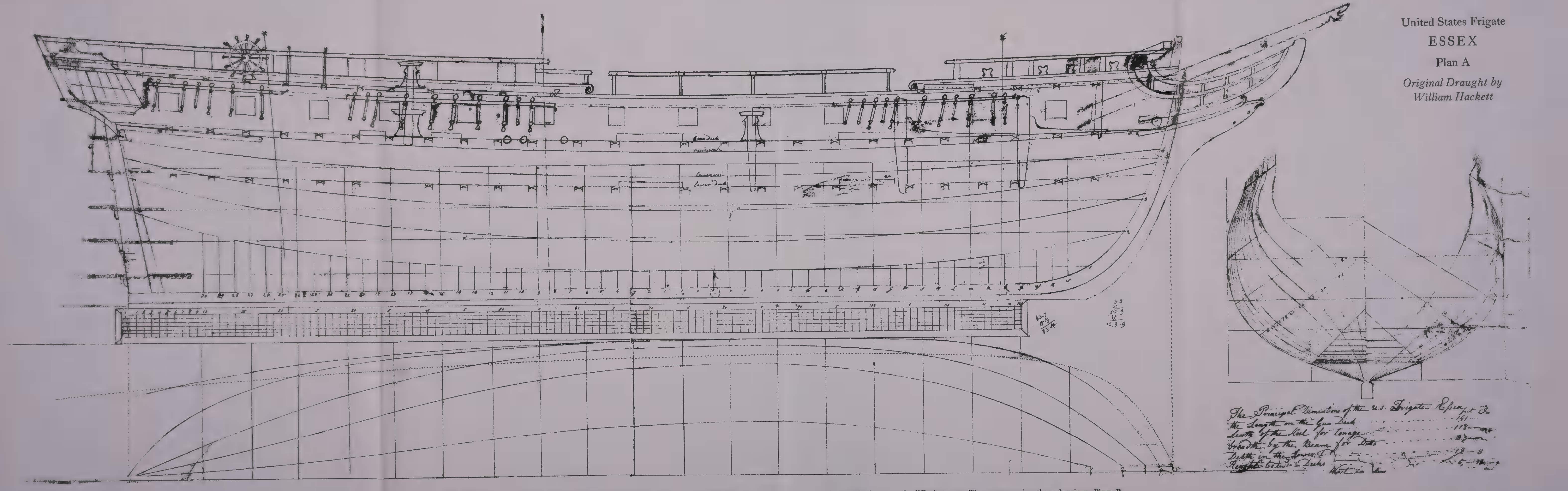
THIS EDITION CONSISTS OF ELEVEN HUNDRED COPIES.

United States Frigate

ESSEX

Plan A

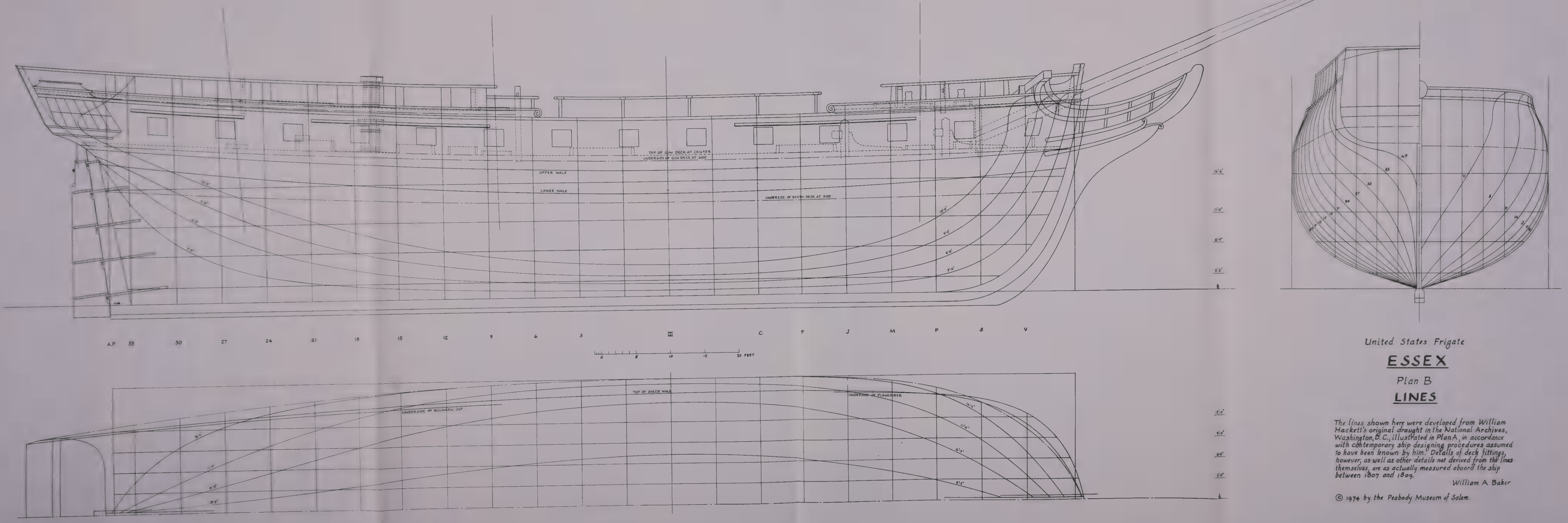
Original Draught by
William Hackett


Gun Deck
Lower Deck
The Principal Dimentions of the U.S. Frigate Essex feet In
the Length on the Gun Deck 141
Lenth of the Keel for Tonage 118
breadth by the Beam for Ditto 37
Debth in the Lower H . . . . 12 – 3
Height betwen Decks 5

The original draught of the frigate *Essex* is housed in the National Archives, Washington, D. C., reference number 41–9–1L.

The evidence suggests that William Hackett did not prepare this copy until sometime after the first of June 1799, by which time the ship was already under construction. The drawing, therefore, probably represents the intended design but does not necessarily form an accurate picture of the *Essex* as actually built.

The many inconsistencies it contains, compounded by Hackett's obviously crude draughting technique, make it extremely difficult to use. The accompanying three drawings, Plans B through D, have been meticulously prepared by naval architect-historian William Avery Baker. They have been based not only on the Hackett draught but also on contemporary information during the course of construction as revealed in The *Essex* Papers and on details recorded in the Josiah Fox Papers during subsequent repairs. Together, within the framework of available data, they solve many of the problems presented by the Hackett original.



United States Frigate

ESSEX

Plan B

LINES

The lines shown here were developed from William Hackett's original draught in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., illustrated in Plan A, in accordance with contemporary ship designing procedures assumed to have been known by him. Details of deck fittings, however, as well as other details not derived from the lines themselves, are as actually measured aboard the ship between 1807 and 1809.

William A Baker

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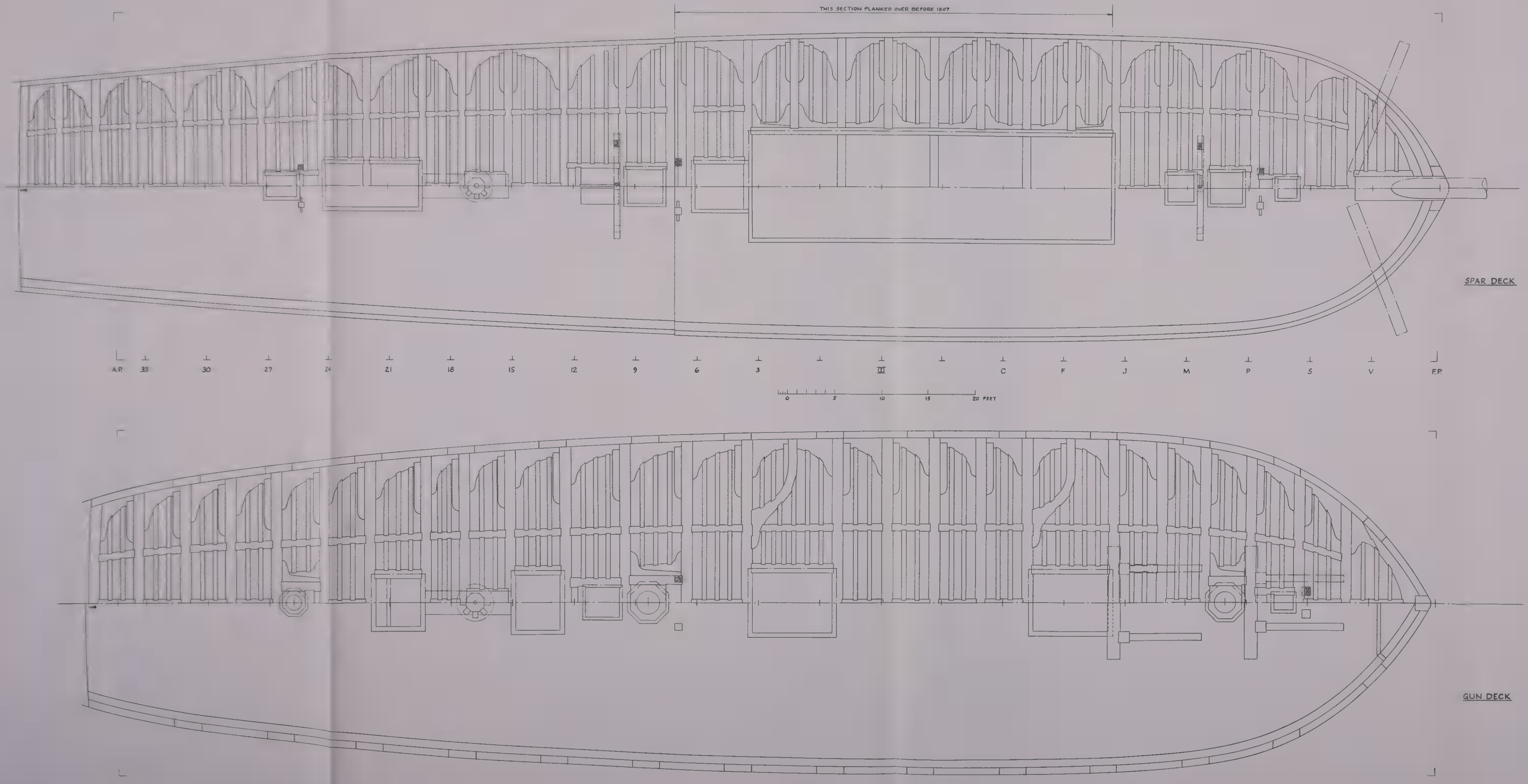
Plan scale: 1″ = 10′ 0″



Plan scale: 1″ = 10′ 0″

United States Frigate

ESSEX

Plan C

DECK PLANS

The outlines have been taken from Plan B, but details are based on measurements taken aboard the ship between 1807 and 1809. Structural sizes have been derived from dimensions contained in the Josiah Fox Papers, numbers 732, 773, 941, and 950, at the Peabody Museum of Salem. The arrangement of the structure is based on Fox 941 and known practices of the period.

William A. Baker

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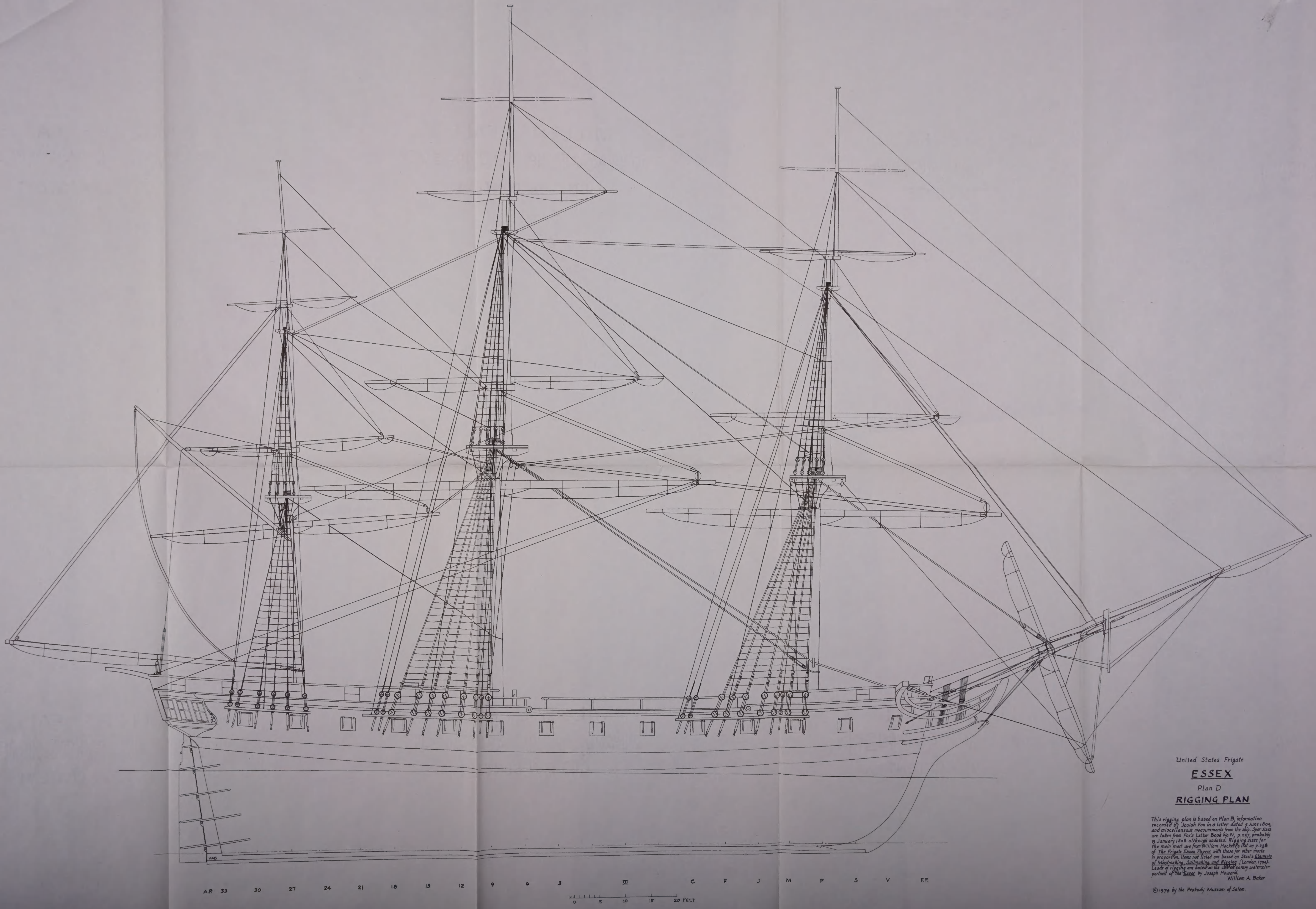

Plan scale: 1" = 10' 0"

United States Frigate

ESSEX

Plan D

RIGGING PLAN

This rigging plan is based on Plan B, information recorded by Josiah Fox in a letter dated 5 June 1809, and miscellaneous measurements from the ship. Spar sizes are taken from Fox's Letter Book No. IV, p. 257, probably 13 January 1808 although undated. Rigging sizes for the main mast are from William Hackett's list on p. 238 of *The Frigate Essex Papers* with those for other masts in proportion. Items not listed are based on Steel's *Elements of Mastmaking, Sailmaking and Rigging* (London, 1794). Leads of rigging are based on the contemporary watercolor portrait of the *Essex* by Joseph Howard.

William A. Baker

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